

TOWARDS EXPEDITIOUS CHURCH PLANTING:
A SMALL CHURCH CASE STUDY

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	vii
THESIS ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER ONE: A CHURCH PLANTING JOURNEY	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE JOURNEY BEGINS	2
III. AN ASSOCIATION IS FORMED	5
IV. THE CHALLENGE: EXPEDITIOUS CHURCH PLANTING	8
V. THE JOURNEY CONTINUES	10
VI. CONCLUSION	13
CHAPTER TWO: A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK	
I. OVERVIEW	14
II. THE CREATION	15
III. THE MISSION OF GOD	16
IV. THE IMAGE OF GOD	18
V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FALL	20
VI. THE MARRIAGE MOTIF	22
VII. GIVING BIRTH	28
A. BEARING FRUIT	29
B. MULTIPLYING	33
C. FILLING THE EARTH	35
VIII. “VERY GOOD”	37

IX.	THE CHURCH	38
X.	CONCLUSION	41
CHAPTER THREE: A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO CHURCH PLANTING		
I.	OVERVIEW	43
II.	AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH	44
III.	CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT	48
IV.	CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT	54
V.	HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT	57
VI.	CONCLUSION	61
CHAPTER FOUR: DYNAMICS OF CHURCHES THAT PLANT CHURCHES		
I.	OVERVIEW	63
II.	RELATIONSHIPS	65
III.	EVANGELIZATION	66
IV.	MULTIPLICATION OF CHURCHES	69
	A. THE CHALLENGE OF MULTIPLICATION	70
	B. THE PRAXIS OF MULTIPLICATION	78
V.	RAISING LOCAL LEADERS	81
VI.	SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS	87
VII.	FAITH	92
VIII.	CONCLUSION	94
CHAPTER FIVE: CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH		
I.	OVERVIEW	96
II.	VISION	97

III.	RESPONSIBILITY	101
IV.	DISCIPLSHIP TRAINING	105
A.	CELL GROUP FORMATION	105
B.	CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	107
C.	LEADERSHIP TRAINING	114
V.	PRAYER	117
VI.	FINANCES	120
VII.	PREPARATION	126
VIII.	CONCLUSION	132
CHAPTER SIX: OUTCOMES		
I.	OVERVIEW	134
II.	THE CHURCH IN RAPOSOS	134
III.	EVALUATIONS	135
A.	OUTREACH AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	135
B.	PRAYER	137
C.	TIMEFRAME	138
D.	LOOKING BACK – LOOKING FORWARD	139
IV.	A NEW CHURCH EMERGES	140
V.	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	141
VI.	CONCLUSION: THE JOURNEY BEGINS AGAIN	142
APPENDIX 1: CHURCH PLANTING QUESTIONNAIRE		144
APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KORY		153
APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GEORGE		158

APPENDIX 4: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JACK	165
APPENDIX 5: MISSION OUTREACH TO RAPOSOS	171
BIBLIOGRAPHY	173
VITA	179

ABBREVIATIONS

AIET	<i>Associação de Igrejas Evangélicas Transculturais (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches)</i>
ATCEM	<i>Asia Theological Centre for Evangelism and Missions (based in Singapore). African Theological Centre for Evangelism and Missions (based in Jinja, Uganda)</i>
CCC	<i>Calvary Charismatic Centre</i>
CDP	<i>Christian Development Program</i>
CGM	<i>Church Growth Movement</i>
CPM	<i>Church Planting Movement</i>
HCM	<i>House Church Movement</i>
LIW	<i>Life in the Word</i>
PDC	<i>Programa de Desenvolvimento Cristão (same as CDP)</i>
TFC	<i>Transcultural Family Church</i>
VFC	<i>Victory Family Church</i>
VNP	<i>Vida na Palavra (same as LIW)</i>

THESIS ABSTRACT

Churches that reproduce themselves fulfill God's mission to see the kingdom of God extend to all peoples through the propagation of the gospel. The multiplication of the local church is initiated in the heart of God. Historical movements that have emphasized the multiplication of new churches have led to the emergence of a twenty-first century approach to church planting. Significant ingredients of churches that plant churches and the formation of a model to exercise these ingredients led a small church towards expeditious church planting. This church serves as a model for both large and small churches to reproduce and multiply.

CHAPTER 1

A CHURCH PLANTING JOURNEY

I. INTRODUCTION

Developing a model for church planting begins with an affirmation of God's direction and the light of his Word directing the steps and the path of one who desires to yield to his Spirit. The journey of faith and trust in God cannot be separated from a sincere willingness to follow the Lord and fulfill His greatest desire of seeing all humanity brought into a personal relationship with Him and His community of believers. This community is found both within the local church and His universal Church.¹

C. Peter Wagner says,

...the ideal Christian life is oriented around three priorities: (a) commitment to Christ, (b) commitment to the Body of Christ and (c) commitment to the work of Christ in the world...Those who wish to serve God effectively in the extension of the Kingdom must be firmly rooted in a local church. Why? Because God accomplishes His purposes in the world, not through Lone Rangers, but through committed communities of His people.²

It is in His community that the journey of each Christian finds the path in which to walk according to His will. Commitment to Christ, the Body of Christ and the work of Christ in the world is commitment to the local church, its purpose and its multiplication.

Extending the kingdom of God through the multiplication of the local church liberates the will of God to touch the soul of humanity among all tribes and nations on the earth. It is this liberation of the gospel among all humanity that allows the spiritual journey to begin in the heart, mind and soul of each person. The relevancy of a model for church planting

¹ The universal Church is here referring to the whole collective body of Christians.

² C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies For Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission and Evangelism* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1987), 22-23.

is developed through the personal journey of surrender and willingness to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

II. THE JOURNEY BEGINS

The evening service was only an average service on that cold Sunday night in Michigan. It was January of 1984 when a seventeen year old boy made his way to the altar in front of the church to finally respond to the Holy Spirit's constant tugging at his heart. He had received Jesus as his Lord and Savior eight years earlier at a Billy Graham crusade. Yet on this night he was yielding his life and his future to serve the Lord all his days. He did not really know what that would entail, but he felt "called" by God and had to respond with a heartfelt "yes" to the Lord. As tears rolled down his cheek he felt the hand of his youth pastor upon his back praying for him. The prayer of this young man's heart bellowed silently to the Lord his desire to "go" wherever the Lord would lead him, whenever the Lord would send him, and to minister however the Lord would want him to minister.³ Both his youth pastor and senior pastor confirmed his "call" to ministry that night. His journey to serve the Lord with all his heart, his mind and his soul began.

This young man, Jeffrey Beck, left his home and family in Michigan to follow God through Bible school, seminary and eventually to leave America to serve God in other nations. In 1993 he flew to Asia for the first time to serve the Lord in Singapore as both a professor at Asia Theological Centre for Evangelism and Missions (ATCEM) and a pastor within Victory Family Centre (VFC).⁴ It was in Singapore that Jeffrey was

³ This young man is Jeffrey Beck, the author. This is an account of his personal journey which led him to be involved in church planting. To "go" wherever, whenever and however the Lord should desire is still the heartfelt cry of his heart to this day.

⁴ Victory Family Centre (VFC) was formerly known as Calvary Charismatic Centre (CCC). The founder, Rick Seaward, started the church in 1977. The author, Jeffrey Beck, was invited by Dr. D.V. Hurst, former

challenged beyond his imagination in church planting and realized the need for the local church's initiative. His pastoral roles at VFC included preparing teams of church members to leave Singapore and plant churches in nations around the world. Each year multiple teams would be sent to various nations from VFC to extend the kingdom of God through church planting.

As a professor at ATCEM in both Singapore and Uganda, Jeffrey taught students and pastors from around the world.⁵ The cross-cultural exposure in his classes represented various people from six continents. The point of view and experiences of each student brought an unparalleled richness to each class. This exposure solidified a kingdom of God oriented worldview of peoples and nations within Jeffrey's heart and spirit with the realization that all nations and people groups have value in the heart of God and not one people group or nation should be elevated above any other. God, as the author of life and humanity, created one earth in which all the nations are a part. Jeffrey began to see his "calling" from God to only one place – the whole world. It is a world without borders in the heart of God. It is one place that includes all peoples and all nations.⁶

president of ATCEM, to teach full-time at the school as well as active involvement within VFC (CCC at the time). Eventually, the author became a pastor over one of seven geographic regions in the church, which put him in more direct contact with Rick Seaward and other senior leadership in the church. He reduced his teaching load at ATCEM and taught part-time. The church changed its name from Calvary Charismatic Centre to Victory Family Centre as it entered into the twenty-first century.

⁵ In Jinja, Uganda, ATCEM stands for African Theological Centre for Evangelism and Missions.

⁶ This worldview was confirmed in the heart, mind and spirit within Jeffrey after he had a vision in the middle of the night while in Singapore. In the vision Jeff saw the earth with all its borders (like a globe) with little flags sticking up out of each nation. The United States and Singapore were a bit elevated as they were a significant part of his life. He became frustrated in his spirit with this view of the world. In an instant his view of the earth changed as he saw it again without borders, flags or elevated countries. A glow of the Holy Spirit surrounded the earth as a heavenly voice proclaimed, "I have called you to one place." Jeffrey realized at that moment that God put a burden for the whole world in his heart. It did not

In 1997, while as Regional Pastor over one of seven geographic regions of VFC in Singapore, Jeffrey made a trip to Latin America to visit some churches that VFC previously planted and to explore Brazil as a potential location to plant new churches.⁷ He traveled with Antonio Morais, a Brazilian member of VFC Singapore. God spoke to the heart and spirit of Jeffrey on this trip that his Singapore region needed to plant churches in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Both Jeffrey and Antonio agreed together in spirit over this church planting endeavor.

Later, while in Singapore, God confirmed upon Jeffrey's heart the need to lead the church planting team to São Paulo, Brazil. He married Lucilla Yeo, who also had a heart for missions, and began extensive preparation with the church planting team. The preparation included living together with the team for three months of adjustment and training in Singapore. Evangelism, follow-up, discipleship and the formation of new cell groups within VFC were part of the praxis of the training. A component of the preparation in Singapore was allocated to spiritual discipline, cultural adjustment, and language learning. This training helped the team adjust to one another in their common residence, outreach, and preparation for Brazil.

Upon completion of the church planting training, Jeffrey, Lucilla, and their team of four from VFC stepped off the plane in São Paulo, Brazil to pioneer a new church.

matter where he lived or what he did as long as it was where God wanted him doing whatever God wanted him to do.

⁷ At the time, VFC had seven regions in Singapore. Each region was responsible for a specific region in the world to plant churches. Jeffrey's region was responsible for North, Central and South America. He would fly to this part of the world at least twice a year to visit VFC churches and explore potential territory/nations/cities in which to send teams of members from his Singapore region to plant new churches. Presently, there are twelve geographic regions in VFC Singapore and each region has assigned countries and areas within each continent to send church planting teams. The whole earth is covered within the combined effort of all twelve regions.

Jeffrey and Lucilla's fourteen year journey in Brazil began in São Paulo and ended in the city of Belo Horizonte. The first church in São Paulo pioneered two other churches before God led Jeffrey and Lucilla to leave the churches in São Paulo to the local leaders they had discipled and trained and go to Belo Horizonte to strengthen and lead a church plant that was struggling in its development and growth. However, they soon discovered that they needed to re-plant the church as it had closed its doors. Gradually the church was planted, leaders developed and preparation was made for the church in Belo Horizonte to plant its first church in 2013. It is this first church planting endeavor that is a case study in this thesis-project.

III. AN ASSOCIATION IS FORMED

Antonio Morais, Missions Director of the Americas for VFC, felt that God spoke to him to unite the developing churches in Brazil into one association to facilitate recognition by the Brazilian government, not as a denomination, but as an organization with common goals and rights. An association of churches would also facilitate outreach in every area and level of society. It would be a representation of the Transcultural churches. *Associação de Igrejas Evangélicas Transculturais – AIET* (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches) was birthed on March 15, 2003.⁸

⁸ Antonio Morais, e-mail message to author, January 31, 2014. Antonio Morais graduated from the school of Accounting, Law and Theology in Brazil. He was a Presbyterian pastor for fourteen years and served as President of the Presbytery, Synod and of the Committee of Education of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil. He had a charismatic experience while visiting VFC in Singapore and subsequently left the Presbyterian church and eventually became part of VFC. The author met him in Singapore and was part of the founding group of pastors/missionaries of AIET. AIET is autonomous yet working with and an extension of VFC Singapore. Antonio is both a Regional Missions Director of VFC and the founder and apostolic oversight for AIET.

The author was part of the original AIET meeting in which five churches gathered to unite and form an association.⁹ The five churches represented two churches that were formed as a result of VFC sending two church planting teams from Singapore to Brazil and three churches that were initiated by Antonio Morais and his Brazilian colleagues. In the year that AIET was formed the number of churches doubled to ten churches. Nine more churches were added in 2004 and AIET continued to grow through continuous church planting. Table 1, on the next page, illustrates the church growth of AIET from 2003 until 2014.¹⁰

Growing from 5 churches to 79 churches in twelve years is noteworthy. However, though the number of churches being planted annually within AIET is at times impressive, the chart does not indicate that all AIET churches are actually planting new churches. Some AIET churches are multiplying while others are not. Yet, even with an exodus of 24 churches from AIET in 2012, AIET continues to grow through church planting. The challenge before AIET is to become more expeditious in church planting. Antonio expects AIET to experience a great multiplication of churches in 2014 and beyond.¹¹ Can a small church in Belo Horizonte, that is part of AIET, make a difference? If the church in Belo Horizonte is able to plant a new church, it will then serve as a model for other AIET churches which are slow to move forward in planting new churches.

⁹ The author, a mission pastor to São Paulo and Antonio Morais were sent to Brazil from Victory Family Centre (VFC) in Singapore. Antonio Morais, as the Missions Director for the Americas from VFC, formed AIET which would function as a covering over all of the present and future churches in Brazil that would relate, through him and the Singapore-based missionaries (including the author), to VFC in Singapore. Antonio and the Singapore-based missionaries became the key links between the Brazilian churches and leaders with VFC in Singapore. The author, who lived in Brazil longer (14 years) than any of the other foreign, Singapore-based, missionaries from VFC, was part of this network.

¹⁰ Antonio Morais, e-mail message to author, January 31, 2014. The author created the chart for Antonio Morais to record his data.

¹¹ Antonio Morais, e-mail message to author, January 31, 2014.

When all AIET churches take steps of faith to plant new churches, the constant annual growth of AIET churches will become phenomenal growth. If the church in Belo Horizonte and AIET churches can do it in Brazil, they will serve as a global model for church planting within various church and missions networks. The kingdom of God will continue to spread across the earth through the multiplication of the local church. One small church can make a difference.

Table 1. The church growth of AIET from 2003-2014					
YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF AIET CHURCHES (JANUARY)	NUMBER OF CHURCHES PLANTED BY AIET CHURCHES	NUMBER OF ESTABLISHED CHURCHES THAT BECAME PART OF AIET	NUMBER OF CHURCHES PLANTED BY FOREIGN MISSIONARIES	NUMBER OF CHURCHES THAT LEFT AIET
2003	5	4	1		
2004	10	9			
2005	19	10			
2006	29	11			
2007	40	7			
2008	47	3			
2009	50	2			
2010	52	20			
2011	72	11			
2012	83	6		2	24 ¹²
2013	67	7		5	
2014	79				

¹² In 2012 one of the key leaders in AIET, in disagreement over some methodological and philosophical issues, left the association and formed his own network of churches. This schism resulted in a total of 24 churches which left AIET. Since then, some of his associate pastors and members have returned to AIET.

IV. THE CHALLENGE: EXPEDITIOUS CHURCH PLANTING

How can any church, especially small churches of 15-70 members plant a new church within a relatively short period of time? Can a small church in Belo Horizonte plant a new church within six months? These are the questions presented in this thesis-project which the author will attempt to answer. Answering these questions involves developing a model for expeditious church planting. The author's personal experience in Brazil will be used as a case study.

Transcultural Family Church (TFC)¹³ in Belo Horizonte is the church Jeffrey and Lucilla planted upon arriving from São Paulo. The church was a small church of 25-30 members when Jeffrey challenged the new pastor and leadership in October of 2012 with the vision to plant a new church in a town outside of Belo Horizonte within six months.¹⁴ The new church would be planted through the local leadership and the new pastor of TFC with Jeffrey overseeing the project. He would neither pastor TFC in Belo Horizonte or the new church plant. It must be a reproducible model that the new pastor and local leadership can reproduce on their own. Once this model is in place it may take more than or even less than six months to plant a new church; however, "six months" provided a tangible goal in which to execute this vision. Furthermore, Jeffrey and Lucilla were to

¹³ Transcultural Family Church (TFC) in Portuguese, the official language of Brazil, is Igreja Família Transcultural. The term "Transcultural" in the name of the church represents its affiliation with AIET (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches) and its network with VFC in Singapore and its networked churches around the world. Though the congregation in Belo Horizonte, with exception to the pioneering mission pastor and his family, is not representative of an international group of believers, its network with VFC and AIET does represent its global affiliation with many peoples and cultures around the world. It is also representative of it in its vision and mission to plant churches to all peoples and cultures around the world. The author will refer to this church in this thesis-project by either using its full name in English or TFC.

¹⁴ Rick Seaward, the founder of VFC, personally challenged Jeffrey to plant a new church before his transition out of Brazil. Jeffrey embraced the challenge, personalized it, and cast it to the new pastor and local leaders of his church in Belo Horizonte.

leave Brazil at the end of the six months, by May 2013, so the new church plant had to rest in the hands and responsibility of the new pastor, leadership and members of TFC.

Faith and doubt have been constant companions of Jeffrey through the process of receiving and implementing the vision to plant a new church within six months. His faith arises from an unwavering belief that a church can be planted in six months. His doubts arise with the fact that what can be done and what is actually accomplished are not always one and the same. Too many uncertainties involving the commitment and the willingness of those involved in the church planting endeavor as well as the recipients of the church plant effort often cloud the faith of the one or the team actively involved in seeing it through. However, true faith sees beyond the doubts and runs with the torch of the vision. Donald McGavran and Winfield Arn, in their book, *Ten Steps For Church Growth*, say,

Thousands upon thousands of illustrations throughout the history of the church show that faith overcame doubt. While the task may seem impossible to the individual Christian or to the individual church, remember, many commands and promises of Scripture are given not only to *you* but to the Body of Christ. *I* can't do it, *you* can't do it; but, empowered by the Holy Spirit, *we*, the church, can do it.¹⁵

This thesis-project recognizes the struggle in fulfilling the vision birthed into the hearts of those who are willing. The outcomes need to be released into the hands of the Lord and the fulfillment of His will accomplished in the willingness of obedient vassals. In this sense, success may not necessarily be seen in the fulfillment of the vision, but through the willingness to engage, in faith, on the journey in which the vision will lead. The goal is to plant a new church. The vision is to see TFC become a church that

¹⁵ Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, *Ten Steps For Church Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1977), 118-119.

continuously plants churches – a reproducing church. With this in mind, the journey becomes the key, not the outcome. The previous church plant in Belo Horizonte failed. Yet the vision for the church in Belo Horizonte eventually led Jeffrey and Lucilla to re-plant the church. Though the outcome of the initial church was dismal, the vision God gave that first team of missionaries succeeded through its re-birth years later. It is often in this type of hindsight that the stability of one's faith overcomes every obstacle. It is at this point that solid faith becomes tenacious in its approach and embrace of the vision given by God.

V. THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

A vision for the church and its multiplication continues on a journey set forth by God, embraced by faithful followers of His word and direction, and lived through the lives of those who are reached with the gospel and brought into the kingdom of God as His body – His church. This thesis-project will engage the reader to participate in this journey through the eyes and heart of the author as he grapples with the vision to plant a new church within six months, his experience, the word of God, the experience and knowledge of others, and the praxis of planting a new church.

Chapter two in this thesis-project will explore a Biblical framework for church planting. What Biblical models and concepts may be applied to church planting? Can a local church, even a small local church, fulfill Acts 1:8? How can The Great Commission be practically applied to the vision of local congregations? A church planting vision must be grounded in Biblical principles. Unifying themes in both the Old and New Testaments will be considered as significant in understanding God's heart for the church and its

multiplication. Heedfulness to the image of God in humanity and the marriage motif as it relates to the church will be given special recognition. The theme of multiplication as seen in the Genesis account as well as the Great Commission and the meaning of church will be seen as a common thread unifying Scripture and its application. Establishing churches, as modeled through the apostle Paul, is a continuing mission for the church of Jesus Christ.

Chapter three continues the theme of church multiplication by looking at a historical approach to church planting. The intention of this chapter is to focus on significant movements and personalities within the last couple of centuries that help form a dynamic for twenty-first century expeditious church planting. The historical development as well as significant principles will be considered for the following movements: an indigenous approach to church planting, the Church Growth Movement, the Church Planting Movement, and the House Church Movement.

Dynamics of churches that plant churches will be discussed in chapter four. As a continuation of chapter three, further principles will be considered by looking at the importance of relationships, evangelization, multiplication of churches, spiritual dynamics, raising local leaders, and faith. This review will include comparative case studies of some Brazilian churches already planting multiple churches in a relatively short period of time. Various authors will contribute to the richness and value of principles learned and gained through their experience and the modern day movements referred to in chapter three. Their thoughts on these principles as well as church planters in Brazil will help form a twenty-first century model for church planting.

Chapter five will approach how to plant another church. This project design will focus on necessary ingredients to plant churches that will also plant future churches. Essential aspects will be considered: vision, responsibility, discipleship formation, training, prayer, finances and preparation. They will be applied to Transcultural Family Church (TFC) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and its desire to plant a new church in a town outside of Belo Horizonte.

In chapter six, the outcomes of the new church planted by Transcultural Family Church (TFC) will be evaluated based upon the preparation, final results and future possibilities. Is this model for expeditious church planting possible? Furthermore, is it reproducible? Will this model serve as a pilot for future church plants? Did TFC actually plant a new church using this model? Will future churches be planted using this same model? An honest and up-to-date assessment will be made. This chapter will further highlight what the author has learned from this project and its implications both for ministry in general and specifically for his present and future ministry. How will this project affect the author's perspective of church planting? Will the specificity of the Brazilian context affect his global perspective of church planting? How can others benefit from this project? The present-day and future implications of this project will lay a foundation for further study and practice. The final outcomes of this thesis-project, combined with the future destiny of the church, will impassion the desire to see the church multiply.

VI. CONCLUSION

Developing a model for expeditious church planting in the contextual environment of Belo Horizonte in Brazil is a key factor in determining the future of TFC. If the church embraces the vision, its growth through multiplication could become exponential. Continual multiplication could eventually lead to growth beyond measure. However, church growth is not really about mathematics. It is about peoples and cultures finding God and being brought into right relationships with Him and His church. Small churches do not need to become large churches as a measure of their growth. Growth, in the body of Christ, produces disciples, and disciples form churches and churches in turn, represent the body of Christ. The vibrancy and mission of the church is found in this cycle. A church that does not reproduce itself will become an island and eventually die. The author is aware of a church in the United States that has about 50 older members. The pastor, frustrated with the unwillingness of the members to contextualize their approach and outreach, is giving the church about fifteen years to die out. In other words, the church dies when the present members eventually die. Unless something radical happens, the church will not last.¹⁶ How often is this the case in too many churches around the world? Size does not matter. Vision matters. The key to church growth is not in building a bigger sanctuary or having dynamic programs. The key was revealed in Genesis, seen throughout Scripture, emphasized in The Great Commission and lived out through the disciples in the early church. The key is *perpetual reproduction*. The future of Transcultural Family Church rests upon this key.

¹⁶ The name and location of the church will remain anonymous so as not to produce unhealthy gossip or criticism that could be harmful to the church and all who are a part of it.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

I. OVERVIEW

It is all by design. There are no accidents, mistakes or coincidences in the heart of God. When God created the world and everything in it, including humanity, He was pleased. In fact, He said that it was “very good.”¹ His “good” plans include His church and its multiplication. The challenge to every church today is to multiply itself. Timothy Tennent comments on the multiplication of churches in Latin American Pentecostalism,

Pentecostals found out that God the Evangelist seemed to be just as pleased to be present in a little house church or a store front church as he was in the big cathedrals... The multiplication of churches rather than of individual Christians is one of the most important reasons Pentecostalism spread so rapidly and so effectively. They were not just preaching individual salvation; they were planting the church, communities of redeemed people, who could live out the reality of the kingdom in the context of their larger communities with whom they have a functional connection.²

Multiplication of churches involves the establishment of Christian communities around the world. It is about reaching out to all who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. It is about building the body of Christ in which every Christian is a part. It is about extending the kingdom of God, His rule and His reign, on earth as it is in heaven. It is about fulfilling God’s mission and identifying with His heart. Additionally, it is about the seed of the mission of God being sown in the heart of every believer.

¹ Genesis 1:31.

² Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the global church is influencing the way we think about and discuss theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 183-184.

This chapter will explore a Biblical framework for church planting. The unifying themes of the Old and New Testaments are significant in understanding God's heart for the church and its multiplication. Genesis chapter one reveals the beginning of life and relationships, and is significant for the development of common themes that relate to the expansion of the church. Attention will be given to the image of God in humanity, implications of the fall in Genesis three, and the marriage motif as it relates to the church. The intention of the church to multiply will be explored through the lens of multiplication in the creation account, the Great Commission, the meaning of church and the apostle Paul's focus on establishing churches.

II. THE CREATION

"In the beginning God *created*...."³ The Hebrew word *bara'* means "to create," which emphasizes the initiation of an object.⁴ The immensity of His power is seen in the creation. God began something wonderful! His purposes in history are seen through His creation and the revealing of the Christ.

Thus says God the LORD, Who *created* the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it, "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations...."⁵

The very act of creation reveals the heart of God and His forming of all things, which include the formation of His people. The Old Testament reveals the tapestry of God's purpose starting with the creation. Marriage, multiplication, becoming a "people" and the

³ Genesis 1:1. All scripture quotations will be from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

⁴ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 1:127.

⁵ Isaiah 42:5-6.

need for redemption are all woven into this tapestry that continues through the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. This tapestry continues through the New Testament with the development of the “believers,” the spreading of the word of God through multiplication among all peoples, and culminates with the marriage supper of the lamb.⁶ An understanding of God, His purposes, humanity, His people and the church begins with the creation and weaves its way through Biblical history, the present day and the future hope. The church was formed in the New Testament, but it was birthed in the heart of God at creation. Therefore, an understanding of the heart of God in creation reveals His purpose for humanity and the church. It can also be seen as His mission.

III. THE MISSION OF GOD

A definition of “theology” would help clarify the understanding of the mission of God. J. Andrew Kirk says, “...we might describe theology as a disciplined reflection on the reality of God and God’s relation to the world, whose intention is to clarify God’s purposes and actions and, in this light, to evaluate the faith and practice of those who claim to know God.”⁷ Understanding the mission of God not only reveals the heart of God, but humanity and its purpose as well. What is his mission? J. Andrew Kirk refers to the mission of God, “(It) flows directly from the nature of who God is...God’s intention for the world is that in every respect it should show forth the way he is – love,

⁶ Revelation 19:7-9 reveals the marriage of a union, Christ and the church, wrought in creation and consummated in revelation.

⁷ J. Andrew Kirk, *What Is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 9.

community, equality, diversity, mercy, compassion and justice.”⁸ God encompasses all these qualities. Humanity should embrace them. The church should manifest them.

David J. Bosch discusses the *missio Dei* (God’s mission) as, “God’s self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate.”⁹ The church occupies an honored seat in the *missio Dei*. God initiated everything. The verb *bara*’ expresses creation out of nothing with only God as its subject. Though it is a technical term that suggests cosmic, material creation from nothing, it theologically communicates the sovereign power of God, who originates and regulates all things to His glory.¹⁰ The *missio Dei* is part of the *bara*’ of Genesis 1:1. Is it possible that the mission of God is the underlying motivation of the creation of all things? It is not a question of which came first, they both have always been part of God. Humanity, family and the church have always existed in the heart of God. Each of them came into being at the right time in the revelation of the *missio Dei* throughout history.

The nature and purpose of God may be seen as the source of the *missio Dei*. Wilbert Shenk says, “God’s saving purpose can be traced through the calling of Abraham and his descendants into covenant relationship for the blessing of the nations.”¹¹ God chose a man and his family to foster a relationship with himself so that all the families

⁸ Kirk, *What Is Mission?*, 28.

⁹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 10.

¹⁰ Merrill F. Unger, William White, eds., “Nelson’s Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament”, in *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), 51-52.

¹¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, “Mission Strategies,” in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, eds. James M. Phillips and Rogert T. Coote (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 221.

and nations of the earth might be blessed. Genesis 12:3 says, "...And in you (Abraham) all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Wilbert Shenk believes that God's strategy can be summarized in terms of three stages: (1) The election and sending of Abraham. (2) The sending of Jesus Christ. (3) The sending of the church as the extension of the mission of Jesus Christ.¹² Through the family of Abraham a nation was eventually formed which would carry the same promise of blessing for all the families of the earth. That nation provided the lineage for the blessing to come through Jesus Christ. Jesus established His church to manifest the blessing and to carry it to all peoples and all nations.¹³

IV. THE IMAGE OF GOD

On the sixth day God created humanity, a marvelous and wonderful creation. It is only humanity that can bear the *imago Dei* (image of God). Genesis 1:26-27 speaks of the highlight in day six of creation,

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our *image*, according to Our *likeness*; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And God created man in His own *image*, in the *image* of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Humanity was made in the *tselem* (image) and *demuth* (likeness) of God.¹⁴ What is this image and likeness that humanity has with God? The image of God is not that which is in humanity's bodily form which came from earthly matter, but in its spiritual,

¹² Shenk, "Mission Strategies," 220-221. (1) Genesis 12:3; (2) John 1:14; (3) John 17:18; 20:21.

¹³ The nation, Israel, though bearers of the blessing, never truly experienced the fullness of it. The incarnation ushered in the fulfillment with Jesus as the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). The "way", the "truth" and the "life" bears the blessing through the church and its multiplication. The establishment of the church is seen in Matthew 16:16-18 with Peter's confession in Jesus as "...the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁴ *Tselem* is Hebrew for "image"; *Demuth* is Hebrew for "likeness".

intellectual and moral likeness to God from whom the breath of life was realized.¹⁵

Johannes Marais adds,

Certainly in what is inalienably human - a body as the temple of the Holy Ghost (the "earthly house" of 2Co 5:1), and the rational, inspiring, inbreathed spirit. Hence man's personably, linking into what is above, separating him from what is beneath, constitutes him a being apart - a rational, self-conscious, self-determining creature, intended by his Creator for fellowship with Himself.¹⁶

The *imago Dei* constitutes human beings that are able to have dominion over God's creation as vice-regents.¹⁷ It is the spiritual, intellectual, rational and moral person that is able to have fellowship with God. Humanity is able to commune with God because God has created within humanity all that is needed for relationship with the Creator. This gives humanity the ability to rule and have dominion over creation because people are able to consider a situation, evaluate it and make a decision based upon what they think is best. Those decisions may or may not glorify God; however, to make considerations from a moral, rational, intellectual and spiritual point of view reflect the *imago Dei* in them.

The *imago Dei* is the building block within humanity to knowing God. It is about relationship with God. God desires relationship with humanity, His people, and His church.¹⁸ Planting churches are planting communities of the people of God who all have the *imago Dei* within them. Evangelism is reaching out to people that reflect the *imago Dei*. Both those inside the church and those outside the church have the *imago Dei* within

¹⁵ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 2:768.

¹⁶ Johannes I. Marais, "Anthropology," in *International Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr (Chicago, IL: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), Biblesoft PDF eBook.

¹⁷ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2:768.

¹⁸ The term "church" is being used as a reference to the people that make up the church, not the physical features of the church. Further discussion about the church (*ekklesia*) will appear later in this chapter.

them. Those involved in church planting should recognize this theological and anthropological certainty.

The *imago Dei* releases humanity to commune with God and with one another because all of humanity bears the *tselem* (image) and *demuth* (likeness) of God. Meeting the needs of people is ministering to the *imago Dei* within each person. Helping people with their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs touches their inner-person in which God's image resides. These people - all people - need God and each other to come together in relationship. The vertical relationship with God brings greater meaning to the horizontal relationship with humanity, which is the basis for planting churches. Simply, the significance of the *imago Dei* is found in relationship with God and each other.

V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FALL

How did the fall affect the relationship of humanity with God and each other? The purpose and ideal of the relationships was not affected. However, the reality of how it would be lived out was affected. Adam and Eve's disobedience to God brought separation between themselves and God. There would no longer be transparency between them and God unless their sin could be removed. Their sin impeded their relationship with God and brought curses. These curses, which came as a result of their disobedience, would affect their lifestyle on earth for the remainder of their days and the generations to come. Instead of living within the ideal of God's purpose for marriage, they would succumb to hardships and struggles. Eve would experience pain in childbirth, her desire would be for her husband, and her husband would rule over her.¹⁹ Adam would

¹⁹ Genesis 3:16

experience hardship in working the soil “by the sweat of his face” in order to get food to eat. The very ground was cursed and would produce “thorns and thistles” which would make it difficult to cultivate and produce a harvest. Working hard so that he and his family could eat would remain with him and the generations that would follow.²⁰

Physical death would eventually overtake him and all of humanity. “For the wages of sin is death....”²¹ Adam was created by God out of the dust, and to dust he would return.²²

All of humanity lives with these curses to this day.²³ The struggle of humanity throughout time and history evidence these hardships. Yet, God had a plan for redemption. This plan was always within the *missio Dei*. It allowed the grace and mercy of God to be manifested through a Savior. That Savior is Jesus Christ. He removed the sin “once and for all”²⁴ that humanity caused and was unable to remove through its own efforts towards righteousness. Israel, the people of God, descending from the family of Abraham, was chosen by God to be a light to the whole world of the goodness and righteousness of God. However, though chosen by God, they were unable to live up to the righteous requirements of the law. Hundreds of years throughout the time of the Old Testament illustrated that the curse that came upon humanity by humanity itself could not be broken except by One who had no sin. Sin could only be removed by One who had no sin and was yet fully human and fully God. Salvation through Jesus Christ was part of the *missio Dei* from before time began.

²⁰ Genesis 3:17-19

²¹ Romans 6:23

²² Genesis 2:7; 3:19

²³ In depth reflection on the specifics of the struggles and hardships of the curses and ideological positions concerning each of them goes beyond the scope of this thesis-project which focuses its direction towards expeditious church planting.

²⁴ 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 6:10

The *imago Dei* never changed within humanity. Even under the curse and sin, God is immutable. He never allowed His image within humanity to be removed or tarnished.²⁵ Even in a sinful state, humanity reflected the image of God. The *imago Dei* was present in Adam and Eve when they chose to disobey God and take of the forbidden fruit. Their eternal state and their relational dynamic was affected, not the image of God in them.

What happened after Adam and Eve disobeyed and received the curses? God reached out to them. The first thing God did was to cover their naked bodies.²⁶ By doing this God was covering the shame they felt. He reached out to them with love and concern. Even though they would have to live with the price of their sin, manifested through the curses and ultimately their physical death, the garments God made for them became a type of salvation that pointed to Jesus covering all of the shame of humanity with His blood.²⁷ God's loving plan of restoration had begun. The choice to receive God covering the sin, through the blood of sacrifice, became an affirmation of God's ideal for both marriage and humanity.²⁸

VI. THE MARRIAGE MOTIF

Relationship is critical to understanding the heart of God and His word. Humanity was created in the image of God so that God could commune with people and they could

²⁵ It is possible, through making wrong moral choices and acting in disobedience to God, to tarnish ones testimony of God and negatively affect how others view God. This is a bad testimony, but it neither changes who God is nor His image in humanity.

²⁶ Genesis 3:21

²⁷ 1 John 1:7; Hebrews 10:12, 17-19.

²⁸ The sacrifice of animals was made by God to provide covering (clothes) for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). Blood was shed. The sacrifice of animals for the covering of sin would be a practice throughout the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus was sacrificed, and His blood was shed to cover all the sins of humanity.

commune with God. Furthermore, the image of God in humanity as seen in the relationships between people is a reflection of the dynamism in their relationships with God. God created them male and female, each one complementing the other so that together they are able to achieve a dynamic relationship that pre-shadows the dynamism in the relationship that God desires to have with them.²⁹ Marriage represents a union that God desires with all of humanity.³⁰ That union is seen in the relationship that Christ has with His church. This is well illustrated in Ephesians 5:22-33,

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. *For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.* This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

Christ is represented as the head and the church as the body. Together they are one. Jesus is the Savior of the body. The body (church) is subject to the head (Christ) in everything. Christ (the head) loves the church (the body) so much that He gave His life for her. Christ did this so that the church (the body) would be forgiven, cleansed and purified. In this way the body could be presented as holy and blameless, like the head.

²⁹ The term "pre-shadows" is not intended to take away from or belittle the dynamism in the relationship between a husband and a wife. It is used simply to emphasize the more significant union of each person with God.

³⁰ In 1 Corinthians 7, the apostle Paul gives advice on marriage as well as remaining single. Either is acceptable. However, the marriage motif, as it relates to Christ and the church, is a union that God desires with everyone.

Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church because it is part of His body. He loves His body – the church – humanity. The creation of humanity in the image of God is brought alive through the illustration and the establishment of the institution of marriage. This is why Ephesians 5:31 is a quote from Genesis 2:24, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” Marriage, in its biblical ideal, illustrates the kind of relationship God desires to have with humanity. The fall, sin, separated humanity from God, but did not change God’s purpose and ideal for the institution of marriage. God’s ideal for marriage was established before the fall and before sin entered into the life of humanity. Even under the curse of sin which began with Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter three, God’s ideal for the institution of marriage never changed. The dynamic of the relationship between a husband and a wife was affected when sin entered into their relationship with God and each other.³¹ They would have to live under this unideal dynamic, which would be passed from generation to generation, for the remainder of their lives. Even so, God had a way to restore that relationship and forgive the sin. The Old Testament sacrificial system provided a means of purification, but was not truly able to save people from their sin. The coming of the Messiah, Jesus, provided a once and for all sacrifice that would eternally save humanity.³² The sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross to save humanity from sin only required faith in Him and belief that He is Savior and Lord.³³ Jesus, the head, always loved the body. Jesus established the church so that the body could grow in Him and

³¹ This “affected dynamic” in their relationship can be seen in how they, and the generations that followed, functioned under the curses brought upon both of them as a result of their sin (Gen. 3:16-19). Struggle and hardships would always be present in their relationship with each other, the earth and the deceiving serpent (Genesis 3:14-15) – the devil.

³² Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 6:10, 23.

³³ Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5.

extend to all nations. The mystery of marriage is found in the relationship of Jesus Christ with His church. Therefore, the creation of humanity in the image of God points to the church.

The church fulfills a conscious design that began at creation. This propositional pattern can be seen in the development of relationships culminating in the existential reality of the church. George Peters says,

The church must be defined in terms of relationship and dynamism...The church is not principally a visible, hierarchical, institutional structure, it is a living organism...It is purposive, dynamic existence in an orderly and existential pattern and with an eternal mission and destiny.³⁴

Relationship is not only key in understanding the heart of God and His word, it is key to understanding the purpose of the church.

The intimacy of relationship can be seen in the process of how a man and a woman come together as “one.” They must “leave” in order to “cleave” so that they can be “one.”³⁵ Leaving their parents in no way dishonors them. It is an actual act of honoring their parents as they “leave” and “cleave” to each other so as to demonstrate a unified love one to another. The fifth commandment, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you,”³⁶ complements the couple leaving their parents so they can unite as one and start a new family. In this way the extended family is formed and actually grows, multiplies and prolongs the life of the whole family. It is an act of leaving a former way of life in order

³⁴ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972), 204.

³⁵ Genesis 2:24.

³⁶ Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16.

to embrace a new way of life.³⁷ This is part of the maturity of humanity. Like the couple that becomes “one,” so God desires that the hearts of people become one with the heart of God. The marriage motif illustrates this well. It is no wonder that it was part of creation and became a significant illustration of how the church should relate to Jesus Christ.

The New Testament amplifies the illustration of Jesus being the “head” and the church being the “body” to Jesus being the “bridegroom” and the church being the “bride.” The “Bride of Christ” is an image for the church emphasizing the ideas of purity, subjection, faithfulness, and intimate communion with Christ her bridegroom-husband. The Old Testament uses the image of a bride to depict Israel’s relationship to Yahweh.³⁸ In the New Testament, Paul makes reference to the church as the “Bride of Christ” in 2 Corinthians 11:2 when he says, “I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.” Though the context of this passage has to do with the typology of the serpent deceiving Eve as false teachers may deceive the Corinthian congregation, Paul’s reliance on this typology of Adam representing Christ and Eve representing the church is again seen in Ephesians 5:32 when he refers to the “mystery” of Genesis 2:24 (“they shall become one flesh”) of Christ and the church.³⁹ This typology continues with the marriage of the Lamb in Revelation 19:7, “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” This is a climatic event in the life of the Bride and the Bridegroom. Jonathan Edwards says,

³⁷ This is well illustrated in the spiritual journey of a Christian leaving his or her former way of life in order to serve God as Lord and Savior.

³⁸ Isaiah 49:18; 54:5,6; 61:10; 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2, 32; Hosea 2:16.

³⁹ D. E. Aune, “Bride of Christ,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (1979; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 1:547.

Then will be the marriage of the Lamb. When the church is completely purified and beautified, and nothing wanting, and all the parts of the body in their due proportion and joyful state; then may the Lamb's wife be said to have made herself ready; then will she be as a bride prepared for her husband, And when the church is thus prepared by Christ at such great cost, at the shredding of his own blood; it will be brought to a more glorious union to Christ than ever before, and to a more intimate communion with him, and to a more high enjoyment of his excellency and love....It will be a day of the gladness of Christ's heart; the feast, and pomp, and holy mirth, and joy of this marriage day, will be continued to all eternity.⁴⁰

The church plays a central role in the marriage motif throughout scripture. The church is both the "body" and "bride" of Christ in whom the image of God magnifies His love and His glory.

When they are "one," they will experience no shame in their nakedness.⁴¹ The fruit of having no shame and the innocence that is coupled with that is the result of becoming "one." For a married couple, consummating the marriage after they have made a commitment one to another, after the "leaving" and "cleaving" and becoming "one," creates an environment of acceptance, love and security. The "nakedness" and the consummation are actually part of the becoming "one." They have become "one" and are yet becoming "one." So it is with the church and Christ. The church, as the "bride," exposes itself in an environment of acceptance and love to the "bridegroom." The "nakedness" represents a vulnerable transparency that is assured and embraced by a loving and faithful "bridegroom." Christ loves His church. His love is so great that the church is overcome with its love for Him. The consummation of this relationship produces a fertile environment for fruitfulness, reproduction and multiplication.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Edwards, "Seventeen Occasional Sermons: Sermon VIII," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume Two* (1834; repr., Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995). 2329-2330, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/works2.html>. This is a sermon of Jonathan Edwards that was originally preached in December of 1740.

⁴¹ Genesis 2:25.

VII. GIVING BIRTH

God's blessing rests upon the marriage relationship. Genesis 1:28 says, "And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth....'" All life on earth was to bear fruit and multiply itself. Adam and Eve would do this by giving birth. Their offspring represents God's blessing upon them and their ability to bear fruit and multiply. This is important for the church to understand. In the marriage motif, the church has the same responsibility – to bear fruit and multiply. The church must give birth, multiply itself and fill the earth.

How does the church give birth? It can be seen as giving birth through the stages of bearing fruit, multiplying and filling the earth. This process leads to birthing or the establishment of something new. The "fruit of the womb" is a child. Adam and Eve bore fruit that keeps multiplying to this day. All of humanity is a multiplication of the fruit of the womb that began with Adam and Eve. The earth is filled with a common ancestry. The fruit of the church are also children, new souls, added to the kingdom of God that come together as the body of Christ. "Bearing fruit" involves building a community of relationships with one another and with God. Both the Evangelistic Mandate and the Cultural Mandate bear fruit through the outreach of the church.⁴² The church needs to

⁴² The Cultural Mandate recognizes that Adam and Eve were given authority from God to rule over all of creation. Thus, a designated divine responsibility is given to humanity to take care of the earth and all of the needs thereof – which include the social needs of fellow human beings. The Evangelistic Mandate focuses on the need of humanity to find God and that God is actually seeking them. This is first seen in the Fall when Adam and Eve sinned and God "called" to the man (Genesis 3:8, 9). God sought out humanity in its sin and the process of redemption began. The Evangelistic Mandate focuses on restoring people to their relationship with God through evangelistic means. Both the Cultural Mandate and the Evangelistic Mandate have their origins in God and continue to this day. Peter Wagner's book "Church Growth & The Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate" is a good resource to read about how both the Cultural and Evangelistic Mandate are imperative in the ministry and outreach of the church and every believer. The Lausanne Covenant is a good document that recognizes the Biblical need to fulfill both mandates. Both

reach out to people with the love of Christ, so that they might know Him as Lord and Savior, and also with the compassion of Christ, so that people might know that God is just and understands their needs.

A. BEARING FRUIT

“Bearing fruit” involves discipleship. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 reveals the need for discipleship and some of its basic ingredients, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” The key verbs in this passage reveal the commission given to the church and all the followers of Jesus Christ. “Go” to all the nations, “make disciples” of them, “baptize” them and “teach” them.

The church must “go” to all nations. Adrian Saravia (1531-1613), a Dutch theologian during the Protestant Reformation said,

The command of preaching the gospel and the sending to every nation are precepts to be understood of the apostles, but are also understood to obligate the church. For the command of announcing the gospel to unbelieving nations referred not only to the age of the apostles, but to all peoples which might exist until the end of the world. Indeed, Matthew in his last chapter where the Lord says there is given to him all power in heaven and on earth, and here orders that, going they should teach all nations, etc., says: “I am with you, even to the end of the world.” And this phrase manifestly cannot refer to the apostles alone, but to all

the Lausanne Covenant and “Church Growth & The Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate” can be found in the Bibliography of this thesis-project. Furthermore, it is significant to note that Adam responded to God’s inquiry about where Adam and Eve were by saying that he was afraid and hid himself because he was “naked” (Genesis 3:9-11). This is a complete contrast to Genesis 2:25 where Adam and Eve “were both naked and were not ashamed.” Creation in the image of God brought no shame. Sin brought shame through disobedience, thus removing innocence. Innocence is restored through acceptance of Jesus as Savior and obedience to him as Lord. As Lord and Savior, who paid the price for the sin of humanity, humanity is redeemed by the blood of Jesus and the relationship with God is restored (Ephesians 1: 7; Romans 5:9; 3:25). The endeavors of church planting must carry this message to all of humanity.

those whom he commands in a confident spirit, and to whom he promises to accompany himself.⁴³

Going to all nations continues until Jesus returns. Today it continues in and through the church. The church cannot limit itself to its locality, it must “go” to “all nations.” Lesslie Newbigin, recognizing that Jesus is the ultimate authority, says, “The Christian mission is...to act out in the whole life of the whole world the confession that Jesus is Lord of all.”⁴⁴ The Christian witness is both home and abroad at all times in every place. Lesslie Newbigin shares some insights regarding the spread of the reign of God over all things in the Old Testament,

Noah is told to be fruitful and multiply and to replenish the earth. Immediately there follows the list of the seventy nations, “the heathen,” who are the fruit of the blessing. These “nations” will be in the background of the story that follows, but at the outset we are reminded that their existence is the fruit of God’s primal blessing (Gen. 10)...God makes yet another new beginning. Among the seventy nations the camera focuses on the family of Eber (Gen. 10:25)...Abraham is chosen...He is promised the blessing, but it is not only for himself: it is for the nations. He will be the bearer of God’s primal promise of blessing for all the nations...Those who are chosen to be bearers of a blessing are chosen for the sake of *all*.⁴⁵

The fulfillment of God’s blessing upon Adam and Eve being fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth is seen throughout the Bible as key characters also receive God’s blessing to be fruitful and multiply. The “blessing” has always been and always will be for all people – for all nations. Throughout time and history God has chosen specific people, families and nations to carry out that blessing. Today it is entrusted into the hands of His church – His people. Biblical and secular history have observed the “filling up” of the earth. Humanity is multiplying. The church must continue to multiply as well so that

⁴³ Adrian Saravia, “De Diversis Ministrorum Evangelii Gradibus, sicut a domino fuerunt instituti,” in *Classic Texts In Mission & World Christianity*, ed. Norman E. Thomas (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 42.

⁴⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 15-17.

⁴⁵ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 31-32.

God's blessing might permeate and be realized by every human and people on earth. That "blessing" is to be reconciled in relationship with God, which will bear fruit and multiply. The church in affinity with the prophet Habakkuk shall declare, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."⁴⁶

"Make disciples" of all nations. Making disciples involves both the "baptize them" and the "teach them" of The Great Commission. The Lord summoned His disciples to "Go" and carry out both the baptismal command and teaching in connection with discipleship. Jesus, in whom all authority was given, regards it as necessary to include the element of water as a sign of the acceptance of an obligation for those who become disciples in the obedient service of faith.⁴⁷ Baptism not only signifies identification with Christ in his death and resurrection (the new convert "dying" to self and being raised anew in Christ),⁴⁸ but is also a public identification as a member of the body of Christ.⁴⁹ The faith, obedience and identification that is in the act of baptism creates a greater receptivity to the teaching of Christ and its application thereof. Discipleship is about growth and maturity in ones walk with the Lord. It directly affects relationship with God, the body of Christ (the church) and with all of humanity. It is not just about new converts learning the way of Jesus, knowing His word and growing in their ministries. Discipleship involves the continual growth and maturity of Christians throughout their lifetime. It is a continuing process for all believers.

⁴⁶ Habakkuk 2:14.

⁴⁷ Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:194.

⁴⁸ Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:2.

⁴⁹ Acts 2:41; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

Discipleship also involves leadership development. James Engel and William Dyrness state,

Leadership development, tragically, has been almost entirely absent in the world missions strategies of this century. This, of course, is yet another damaging extension of the great omission of spiritual formation in prevailing concepts of the Great Commission. The shepherds have not been trained to disciple and equip the flock. We are convinced that leadership development is today's *greatest* priority....⁵⁰

Leadership development is a priority, but defining when a potential leader is actually a leader, or is ready to lead can be very relative to the situation, the church structure and the personal opinions of those in charge. Roland Allen (1869-1947) recognized that the Apostle Paul focused on establishing churches, "The secret of success in this work lies in beginning at the very beginning. It is the training of the first converts which sets the type for the future."⁵¹ Discipleship integrates teaching, training and lifestyle. Too often discipleship in today's church and mission field focuses on one or the other, but not all three. Jesus walked with His disciples. He taught them and trained them about life, reality and how to minister. They were discipled and produced more disciples. The apostle Paul did the same. Roland Allen says, "The facts are these: St. Paul preached in a place for five or six months and then left behind him a church, not indeed free from the need of guidance, but capable of growth and expansion."⁵² The apostle Paul was proactive in his approach to church planting and raising up leaders. This is an important aspect of discipleship that is required in order to fulfill the Great Commission and establish churches that plant churches. The apostle Paul was "fruitful" because leadership

⁵⁰ James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness, *Changing The Mind Of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 105. His reference is to the 20th century; however, its application to the beginning of the 21st century is still relevant.

⁵¹ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 81.

⁵² Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 84.

development was a priority in order for the kingdom of God to be multiplied across the earth through church planting. Believers at all levels of Christian maturity must continually be discipled so that the next stage of the birthing process might be established: multiplication.

B. MULTIPLYING

“Bearing fruit” leads to multiplication. The sign of true discipleship is when the one being discipled begins to disciple someone else. This is how multiplication begins to take place. Those being discipled, disciple others who disciple others...etc. The problem or challenge for many involved in ministry today is that they look for the end result and its numerical value instead of focusing on the potential disciples in front of them. Many get trapped in the mathematical equations of multiplication, often ending up making a lower investment in many people instead of making a higher investment in a few key people. God focused on key people or groups of people (remnant) through whom the process of multiplication began. Adam and Eve were told to “Be fruitful and multiply....”⁵³ God told Noah and his sons, “Be fruitful and multiply....”⁵⁴ When God changed Jacob’s name to Israel He said, “Be fruitful and multiply....”⁵⁵ Jeremiah, in a prophecy about the coming Messiah, makes reference to the Lord gathering the remnant of His flock, bringing them back to their pasture saying, “...they will be fruitful and multiply.”⁵⁶ Multiplication begins with fruitfulness, not results. The results of multiplication will eventually be seen and felt; the fruitfulness of multiplication begins

⁵³ Genesis 1:28.

⁵⁴ Genesis 8:16-17; 9:1, 7.

⁵⁵ Genesis 35:11.

⁵⁶ Jeremiah 23:3.

with the one or the few in whom God has entrusted with a heart and vision for discipleship. As each one is discipled and begins to disciple others, growth takes place. The key to understanding multiplication is the fact that it should never end. Too often Christians limit their understanding of multiplication to the church growth in their local congregations. Though this is a form of multiplication, it does not necessarily ensure true discipleship is taking place. A mega church may experience phenomenal church growth but may not necessarily be multiplying itself and “filling the earth.” The significance for church planting is important at this point. Multiplication in the marriage motif not only acts as a commission and motive for every Christian, but it is a commission and motive for the “Bride of Christ” – the church – to multiply itself. Making disciples for a Christian results in the multiplication of new Christians. Making disciples for a church results in the multiplication of new churches. The Christians, people, are the church. They reproduce themselves in the church, and as a church they reproduce more churches. In the book of Acts, the Lord added to their number daily and the church grew.⁵⁷ It is a great example of sovereign church growth. However, Jesus commissioned His “Bride” to make disciples of all nations. God said to Adam and Eve to “fill the earth.” When “a great persecution arose against the church...those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.”⁵⁸ The church in Jerusalem multiplied itself as the believers preached the word in other towns. Multiplication involves both new believers and new churches being established.

⁵⁷ Acts 2:47.

⁵⁸ Acts 8:1-4.

C. FILLING THE EARTH

God told Adam and Eve “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth....”⁵⁹

Continuous pregnancy and giving birth fills the earth. The challenge to the Christian is to be continuously pregnant with the Word of God so as to always give birth through discipleship. In this way the Christian will be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The church, as the “Bride of Christ,” is also continuously in a state of gestation. It gives birth, but never loses its pregnancy. Always pregnant; always giving birth. The book of Acts focuses on the historical growth and development of the early church, but begins with a key passage, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”⁶⁰ The Greek word for “power” in Acts 1:8 is *dunamis*. It means might or power to be a witness.⁶¹ Jesus promised his disciples that they would receive this *dunamis* in Luke 24:49, “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” The disciples of Jesus were being prepared to receive the pneumatological reality of the presence and power of God to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria until the earth would be filled with the gospel of Jesus Christ. David Bosch says, “The same Spirit in whose power Jesus sent to Galilee also thrusts them into mission. The Spirit becomes the catalyst, the guiding and driving force of mission.”⁶² They were impregnated with the gospel and gave birth every time a new soul believed. Upon belief, the seeds of impregnation were already a reality and seen through a period of gestation through

⁵⁹ Genesis 1:28.

⁶⁰ Acts 1:8.

⁶¹ Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:357.

⁶² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 113.

discipleship until birth came once again. Those being discipled began to disciple others. So it is with the church. The impregnated church gives birth to new churches. Thus, filling the earth with communities of believers – the body of Christ.

Acts 1:8 represents a confirmation and an extension of the Great Commission. The believers were to be “witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” which is part of the “all the nations” of Matthew 28:19. The sequential order of geographic witness is actually nonsequential. The witness is in all of the geographic locations at the same time. The church in Jerusalem was to be a witness in their locality (Jerusalem) as well as in other towns, regions and countries at the same time. They were to “go” to these places while they continued to build the church in Jerusalem. Their witness would be fulfilled by making disciples and establishing communities of believers all over the earth. As each church was established they were to follow the same nonsequential geographic witness until the earth was filled with the body of Christ. The church continues that commission today.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to Colossae, extols the church when he says, “...the gospel, which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth.”⁶³ “Bearing fruit” here stands for the effect of the gospel, which “grows and bears fruit in all the world.” The combination of “bearing fruit” and “increasing” (growing) is also seen in Colossians 1:10 in reference to Christian

⁶³ Colossians 1:5b-6.

conduct, "...bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."⁶⁴ Colossians 1:10 lays emphasis on both the personal development of the believers and the corporate growth of the church. Both the church and the individuals who make up the church are growing in the knowledge of God which is evidenced by their good works. Discipleship is taking place. Colossians 1:6 lays emphasis on the fact that the gospel is growing throughout the world, of which the church in Colossae is a good example. The "bearing fruit...and increasing" of Colossians 1:10 ties the Great Commission emphasis of "make disciples" to the "bearing fruit and increasing" in Colossians 1:6. This ties in with the Great Commission emphasis "of all the nations." The combination of "bearing fruit" and "increasing" is also seen in the Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply."⁶⁵ Souls added to the kingdom of God and churches covering the earth ensure that the witness of the church will not dissipate. The church must give birth to new churches where believers can commune together and live as the body of Christ – His Bride.

VIII. "VERY GOOD"

The sixth day in Genesis chapter one ended well; "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was the evening and there was morning, the sixth day."⁶⁶ The word for "good" in Hebrew is *towb*. It means something that is good, pleasant, agreeable, appropriate and excellent.⁶⁷ During The Creation, this word is used seven times in reference to God recognizing that what He made was excellent.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 2:252.

⁶⁵ Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:252-253.

⁶⁶ Genesis 1:31.

⁶⁷ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew And English Lexicon Of The Old Testament* (1907; repr., London, England: Oxford University Press, 1968), 374.

⁶⁸ Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

However, at the end of the sixth day God saw all that He had made, including humanity, and said that “it was very good.” The Hebrew word *me’od* is the word for “very” in the New American Standard Bible. It expresses the idea of exceeding or abundance in which the Creator calls His creation exceedingly good or abundantly good.⁶⁹ Why the added expression in Genesis 1:31? Certainly all that God created was good with humanity being His crowning work, created in His image. The apostle Paul reveals insights into the exceedingly good moment at the end of the sixth day,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...And He put all things in subjection under His (Christ) feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.⁷⁰

God knows everything, and His plan for humanity from the very beginning was abundantly excellent. God knew all the sin and folly that would follow the creation and He already had a destiny and a plan for their restoration to Himself. As history passes through the Old Testament the answer is revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price for all the sins of humanity and established His church so that the gospel might be embraced and propagated to the very ends of the earth. God’s creation including humanity and the church is exceedingly excellent in the heart of God. It is “very good.”

IX. THE CHURCH

The Greek term *ekklesia* is used in the New Testament to convey the concept of church. It is a compound word taken from *kaleo*, “to call,” and *ek*, “out from.” The

⁶⁹ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:487.

⁷⁰ Ephesians 1:3-5, 22-23.

compound verb means “to call out from,” and the noun means “the called-out ones.”

However, the New Testament implies the meaning of “called unto.” The positive implication is a reference to an assembly of people who are related to God and obey God.⁷¹ Therefore, *ekklesia* may be seen as “the called-together ones.”⁷²

Jesus first uses the word *ekklesia* (church) in Matthew 16:18, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church....” Jesus is establishing that the church is to be built upon Peter’s confession that “(Jesus is) the Christ, the Son of the living God.”⁷³ Jesus is also referred to as the corner stone, “...you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord....”⁷⁴ There is a clear development of the church and the people of God in the New Testament. The Old Testament prepares the way for Jesus and the development of His church. The creation event started the process of demonstrating God’s love toward all of humanity and establishing His people and His church.

A prevailing and fundamental idea of *ekklesia* in the New Testament “is that of a local body of believers organized on principles of brotherhood for the purpose of proclamation, fellowship, worship and service.”⁷⁵ The simplicity of this idea may be seen in the strategy that the apostle Paul incorporates. Leslie Newbigin says of Paul,

⁷¹ Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 200.

⁷² The term “the called-together ones” was first introduced to the author in 1993 during his Greek class at Fuller Theological Seminary by Father Sam Gantt. He was a priest in the Greek Orthodox Church as well as a professor of Greek at Fuller Theological Seminary.

⁷³ Matthew 16:16.

⁷⁴ Ephesians 2:19-21.

⁷⁵ Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 200-201.

In light of all we can know about the preaching and practice of Paul, we would have to answer that through his preaching and through the work of the Holy Spirit there have been formed throughout the region communities of men and women who are being offered acceptably to God as the firstfruit of the Gentiles. The coming to birth of these communities of the saints – those whom God has called and claimed as his own – is the fruit of his work...He is sent to lay the foundation stone of the church, and that stone is Christ. The result of his work, in other words, will be a community that acknowledges Jesus Christ as the supreme Lord of life. When this community exists, the missionary has done the work for which he was sent.⁷⁶

Paul established communities of fellowship and common focus on the gospel and its proclamation. Roland Allen adds, “The facts are unquestionable. In a very few years, he (Paul) built the Church on so firm a basis that it could live and grow in faith and in practice, that it could work out its own problems, and overcome all dangers and hindrances both from within and without.”⁷⁷ It is an incredible simplicity to recognize that the communities established by Paul had a central focus of Jesus as Lord and Savior upon which the churches were birthed and built.

Discipleship took place as people responded to Jesus, were baptized, and taught the Scriptures and teachings of Jesus.⁷⁸ Potential leaders were given leadership responsibilities so that Paul could release them and the new church to the Holy Spirit. Paul would not abandon them, he would follow-up with letters and visits. However, the church was left in their hands so that they could work out their faith and allow the Holy Spirit to build the church. Roland Allen sees four things that the apostle Paul deemed necessary for the establishment of his churches: A traditional or elementary Creed, The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, Orders, and the Holy Scriptures.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁶ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 128.

⁷⁷ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 7.

⁷⁸ Matthew 28:19-20.

⁷⁹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 107.

basic elements of these four things are still applicable today. New churches need basic fundamentals of the faith to keep them firm in the faith. A more in-depth development of doctrine may be formulated as the church grows and matures. Baptism and Holy Communion not only bring the church together in a common fellowship, but help them stay focused on Christ. Leadership development, from the very beginning, needs to take place so that the body may grow, develop and lead itself under Christ. Follow-up and encouragement of the local leaders, as the apostle Paul did, is part of the “making disciples” of The Great Commission. However, the leaders must be allowed to lead. Finally, the Bible must be the foundation of guidance and direction for the new church. It must be preached, taught and meditated upon regularly and constantly.

X. CONCLUSION

The purpose for humanity may be revealed in the heart of God at the creation. God’s character and nature is revealed through His mission which embraces both the world and the church. The image of God within humanity releases freedom and the ability to love God and people with heart, mind and soul. Intimate relationship desired by God with His church is seen in the marriage motif with the divinely ordained relationship between a husband and wife. Discipleship, multiplication, and extending the influence of God over the whole earth is accomplished through the church as it gives birth to new churches. This creates an environment where believers can commune together and live as the body of Christ. God recognizes that all that He made, His plans for humanity and His church, are exceedingly good. Each person is stamped with God’s loving “very good” on him or her. God has called His people together and formed the church. It is this church that must come together and propagate the gospel throughout the earth through a

continuous planting and birthing of new churches. As the gospel is received, it must find a home, a community where it can flourish and continue to ignite the hearts and souls of humanity around the globe. That home, consists of the hearts and souls of those who make up the church. It is a home in which all people should have access.

CHAPTER 3

A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO CHURCH PLANTING

I. OVERVIEW

The apparent desire to see each movement of God that produces a multiplication of churches as being traced back to New Testament principles is evident throughout multitudinous missiological literature. Should the church of the twenty-first century return to a New Testament approach to church and its propagation? Is the church today in need to simplify its vision, methods and strategy in order to comply to a “Pauline approach” to church planting? Or should the church build upon New Testament principles in its approach to church planting while implementing trans-generational and transcultural contextual realities to an emerging church in the twenty-first century? Charles Van Engen, recognizing that there needs to be an openness to new ways of perceiving the nature of the church within a specific time and historical context, as well as asserting the one reality of the Lord of the Church which is the same yesterday, today and forever,¹ speaks of the emerging reality of the church,

Between Pentecost and Parousia the Church is a movement which is becoming...an emerging reality. Its actions within a historical situation (what some theologians prefer to call *praxis*), as well as its ever-changing place and nature in the world, dictate that we constantly look for new ways to express the concept of *Church*...In its sameness, then, the Church must continually change its mode of expression, for it is historically oriented to an constantly-changing world. The new ideas should enhance and strengthen the missiological dimensions of the Church's nature as those are given concrete expression in today's world.²

¹ Hebrews 13:8.

² Charles Van Engen, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 74.

It is upon this premise of an emerging Church, that examination in this chapter will be focused more on recent church growth movements³ and significant personalities within the last couple of centuries in the formation of a dynamic for twenty-first-century expeditious church planting.⁴ Recognition of historical roots found in present-day practices should compel the body of Christ to further multiplication of His body. Significant principles found in an indigenous approach to church planting, the Church Growth Movement, the Church Planting Movement, and the House Church Movement will all be considered through their historical development.

II. AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH

Indigenous principles have become more of a common ideology within missiological thought than practice since its inception over 150 years ago. The Church Growth Movement, the Church Planting Movement and the House Church Movement have all adopted, to some degree or another, an indigenous approach to church multiplication. It is an approach that has truly become a movement of thought and principle. It could be considered one of the few movements that kept growing, albeit slow

³ "Church growth movements" is used here to generalize any movement or missiological principles that perpetuate the growth and multiplication of churches as differentiated from the Church Growth Movement (CGM) which began under Donald McGavran. The Church Growth Movement (CGM) will be considered later in this chapter.

⁴ It is beyond the scope of this thesis-project to look at the myriad of lessons to be learned and considered by an in depth look of the development of the church and its various movements since its inception. However, there are a number of sources to gain a better understanding of the development of the church and Christianity. See, for example, Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History Of Christianity*, Rev. ed., 2 vols. (1953; San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1975); as the title suggests, this two volume work focuses on the development of Christianity until 1950. This revised edition also includes "The World Christian Movement 1950-1975: An Interpretive Essay" by Ralph Winter. See also, Mike Barnett and Robin Martin, eds., *Discovering The Mission Of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012). This work focuses on a Biblical approach to the mission of God and considers its development throughout church history. Timothy Tennent, in *Invitation To World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), explores the foundations of missions practice while seeking to integrate Biblical and theological reflection. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 in his book identify significant missiological turning points in the history of missions.

in its first one hundred years, as compared to other movements that remained for a season of great influence until another movement outgrew the former.

A Protestant understanding of indigenous principles was developed by Henry Venn (1796-1873) of the English Church Missionary Society and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Both of them came to an understanding of indigenous principles with their three-self formula: self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting. Venn and Anderson were convinced that relying upon foreign missionaries and foreign funding was a detriment to the long term growth of the indigenous church.⁵ The three-self formula set the goal of speeding up the pace of world evangelization by continually moving to new places and allowing the local, indigenous, leaders of the congregations they started to oversee and run the church without missionary help.⁶

John L. Nevius (1829-1893), was a Presbyterian missionary to China who developed what is known as the “Nevius Plan.” His plan took the three-self principles of Venn and Anderson and developed them into key elements which were published in a book, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, in 1886.⁷ Some of those key elements are as follows: the churches should be self-supporting and led by national lay workers, the methods and means that the churches utilize should be determined by and responsible to the local believers, the local churches should support their own

⁵ Timothy Tennent, *Invitation To World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 276.

⁶ Robert Reese, “The Surprising Relevance Of The Three-Self Formula,” *Missions Frontiers* 29, no. 4 (July-August 2007): 25, accessed February 25, 2014, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/29-4-three-self-churches.pdf>.

⁷ John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, 3rd ed. (1886; New York, NY: Foreign Mission Library, 1899), 3. This work originally appeared as a series of articles which was published in the “Chinese Recorder” in 1885.

pastors, churches to be built should be in native style with local resources, and the believers should be carefully instructed in the Bible with the Bible being central to the entire work.⁸ As the twentieth century was approaching, the Nevius plan proved successful in Korea which eventually led to the growth of Protestants outnumbering Roman Catholics by the year 1914.⁹ The fruit of this lay, indigenous movement was seen in the multiplication of churches.

Roland Allen (1869-1947) was an Anglican missionary in China (1895-1902) before publishing his distinguished 1912 book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* and its 1927 companion volume, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*. In these books he compared the mission efforts of that time with the Apostle Paul. He encouraged missionaries to have more confidence in their converts, to release control over them, to trust that the Holy Spirit would help them and teach them to work effectively in their churches, and to know that they would inevitably make mistakes. This method of the Apostle Paul, in Allen's opinion, was far superior to the methods utilized at that time. However, Allen also predicted that few would pay attention to his proposals, as colonialism had not yet ended.¹⁰ Colonialism is the policy and practice of control by one power over a dependent area or people.¹¹ David Bosch says, "Colonialism and mission, as a matter of course, were interdependent; the right to have colonies carried with it the duty to Christianize the colonized."¹² It was only in the second

⁸ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 69.

⁹ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History Of Christianity: Reformation To The Present*, Rev. ed., (1953; San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1975), 2:1328.

¹⁰ Reese, "The Surprising Relevance Of The Three-Self Formula," 26.

¹¹ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "Colonialism."

¹² David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 227. Also refer to pages 226-230 and 302-313 for a good historical perspective of colonialism and mission.

half of the twentieth century, after World War II (1939-1945) had ended as well as the end of colonialism, that there was a sudden interest in the indigenous principles, including the three-self formula, thus proving Allen's prediction was correct. As the colonized nations were initiating local governance, so the leaders in missions circles felt it was time for nationals to lead their own churches.¹³

Melvin Hodges (1909-1988), an Assemblies of God missionary, first put indigenous principles to practice when he was a missionary in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Prior to leaving for his mission, he had read and expounded upon the principles in Roland Allen's books *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* (1912) and *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It* (1927).¹⁴ The works of Roland Allen, an Anglican, were able to connect to Pentecostals, like Hodges, because of his stress on the cruciality of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit for mission.¹⁵ However, a group of Pentecostal missionaries did not accept Allen's views uncritically. They rejected his sacramentalism,¹⁶ allegiance to Episcopal church polity, and felt that Allen's emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in mission fell short of their belief in miracles, signs and wonders accompanying the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁷ Hodges brought out pentecostal reflection from Allen's writings on indigenous principles which became the foundation of his popular book *The Indigenous Church* (1953). Over twenty years later, recognizing the growth and development of the indigenous church,

¹³ Reese, "The Surprising Relevance Of The Three-Self Formula," 26.

¹⁴ Gary McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 1 (January 1998): 21, accessed February 26, 2014, www.internationalbulletin.org/system/files/1998-01-ibmr.pdf.

¹⁵ Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel From Everywhere To Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 117.

¹⁶ Sacramentalism is the belief that the sacraments are inherently efficacious and necessary for salvation. See *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "sacramentalism."

¹⁷ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 21.

Hodges wrote a book, *The Indigenous Church And The Missionary* (1978), to give assistance to those already involved in missions work and for candidates going to the mission field for the first time. Samuel Escobar says of Hodges,

His work influenced the missionary policies of the Assembly of God, but he did not reflect specifically about the uniqueness of the Pentecostal experience. From my point of observation in Latin America, North America and Europe I would say that Pentecostal and charismatic churches have kept closer than other denominations to the New Testament pattern explored by Allen.¹⁸

Hodges found within his Pentecostal heritage a ready means to execute indigenous principles not only in Latin America, but around the world. Howard Synder refers to Melvin Hodges as “arguably the most influential Pentecostal missiologist of the second half of the twentieth century.”¹⁹

III. CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

The Church Growth Movement (CGM) was launched by Donald A. McGavran (1897-1990) and focused on the dynamics of church growth and large Christian conversion movements. In the early 1930's, while McGavran was a missionary in India, he began to wonder why some churches reached people and grew while others declined. He asked, “When a church is growing, why is it growing?” Finding the answer to that question became his obsession. For the following twenty years he studied various growing and non-growing churches in various global locations.²⁰ He identified four questions that would galvanize the Church Growth Movement:

¹⁸ Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 117.

¹⁹ Howard A. Synder, *The Community of the King*, Rev. ed. (1977; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 50.

²⁰ George G. Hunter III, “The Legacy of Donald A. McGavran,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no. 4 (October 1992): 158, accessed February 26, 2014, www.internationalbulletin.org/sytem/files/1992-4-ibmr.pdf.

1. What are the causes of church growth?
2. What are the barriers to church growth?
3. What are the factors that can make the Christian faith a movement among some populations?
4. What principles of church growth are reproducible?²¹

His church growth theory was eventually published in a book called *The Bridges of God* (1955) which has been labeled the Magna Carta of the Church Growth Movement.²² Many missionaries recognized the similarities between McGavran's "Christward people movements" and Roland Allen's "spontaneous expansion of the church."²³ Both viewpoints drew from indigenous principles modeled after the apostle Paul.

In 1965 McGavran accepted the invitation of David Hubbard, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, to become the founding dean of their new School of World Mission. At Fuller, which later grew to be one of the most influential schools of missiology, McGavran was able to influence a vast number of students in the School of World Mission. He was also able to collaborate with colleagues like Alan Tippett, J. Edwin Orr, Charles H. Kraft, Ralph Winter, Peter Wagner, and Arthur Glasser.²⁴ His continued travels, research and collaboration eventually led to what is considered his magnum opus, *Understanding Church Growth* (1970).²⁵ This book and *The Bridges of God* (1955) form the basic texts of the Church Growth Movement.²⁶

²¹ Hunter, "The Legacy of Donald A. McGavran," 158.

²² Gary L. McIntosh, "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored," in *Evaluating The Church Growth Movement: 5 Views*, eds. Gary L. McIntosh and Paul E. Engle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 13.

²³ A. R. Tippet, "Portrait of a Missiologist by his Colleague," in *God, Man and Church Growth*, ed. A. R. Tippet (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 23.

²⁴ McIntosh, "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored," 15.

²⁵ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church* (1976; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 16.

²⁶ David J. Valleskey, "The Church Growth Movement: An Evaluation" (paper presented to the Ohio Conference, Michigan District, at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Hollidaysburg, PA, October 15, 1990), 3, accessed February 18, 2014, www.wlsessays.net/files/ValleskeyGrowth.pdf.

C. Peter Wagner (born 1930), after serving as a missionary in Bolivia, followed the teachings of Donald McGavran at Fuller Theological Seminary in the 1970's. He spent most of the seventies teaching church growth principles and bringing it to the American church which resulted in his first book on American church growth, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church* (1976).²⁷ He published *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (1981) which began to identify him as the leading spokesperson of the Church Growth Movement.²⁸ Wagner occupied the McGavran Chair of Church Growth from 1984-1999 at Fuller Theological Seminary. After the death of McGavran in 1990, Wagner had the task of promoting the Church Growth Movement as its key spokesperson.²⁹ However, it was back in 1980 that Wagner felt there must be a concomitant spiritual dimension to church growth which McGavran did not emphasize in his teaching and writing.³⁰ Wagner began to steer the movement towards these spiritual factors with a special emphasis on prayer and spiritual warfare. Upon his retirement from the McGavran Chair of Church Growth in 1999, the movement has been without a clear spokesperson in the United States.³¹

Based upon the premise that God “wills that lost persons be found,”³² McGavran approached evangelism pragmatically that resulted in various methodologies that allocated the measurement of church growth by numerical value. The social and behavioral sciences were utilized to research the causes of church growth which resulted

²⁷ C. Peter Wagner, “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23, no. 4 (October 1999): 166, accessed February 26, 2014, www.internationalbulletin.org/system/files/1999-04-ibmr.pdf.

²⁸ Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 54.

²⁹ McIntosh, “Why Church Growth Can’t Be Ignored,” 20.

³⁰ Wagner, “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” 166.

³¹ McIntosh, “Why Church Growth Can’t Be Ignored,” 20.

³² Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., rev. and edited by C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 21.

in numerous empirical studies of church growth and church-planting movements.³³

Orlando Costas (1942-1987) both critiques and affirms the numerical values within the Church Growth Movement by recognizing church growth as a sign, not an instrument of mission. He says,

A sign is something that points beyond itself, in this case to the mission of God fulfilled in the proclamation and the presence of the kingdom, which may open the way for the recognition of other signs...

An instrument...in God's mission...is the church, not its growth, (it) is the instrument by which the mission is furthered and fulfilled. Multidimensional growth witnesses to the church's faithfulness in the execution of its task.

This distinction between growth as a sign and the church as an instrument of mission needs to be made in the face of those today who, getting their inspiration from "successful" church-growth situations...have taken the notion of growth and built it into a methodological category.³⁴

Costas recognized the value of growth and its function as an indicator of vitality, not the means by which the body functions. He believed mission is fulfilled through and by the church, not through church growth.³⁵ Costas is correct in this assertion without leaving the local church justification for lack of growth. A small church is as much an instrument of God's mission as a large or mega church. However, the strength or verve of a local church can be seen and felt through the fruit it bears. Numerical growth may be one sign among many other signs. Other signs may include: a greater hunger for God and fulfilling His will, increase in the zeal to proclaim the gospel, members and new converts being disciplined to new levels of faith in the word of God, churches being planted through this church both locally and abroad, increase in the percentage of member participation in the

³³ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 71.

³⁴ Orlando Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1982), 52-53. In his footnote on pages 56-57, Costas notes that C. Peter Wagner takes this position in *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church* and that he defends it in *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate*, pp.75-77. Both of these books are in the bibliography.

³⁵ Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate*, 53.

various ministries and leadership roles, kingdom oriented social and political impact within the community, felt needs in both the church and community being met through the various ministries of the church, and various other signs that indicate ecclesiastical health and vibrancy. This multidimensional recognition of the presence of God in the local church frees it to be all that God designed, developed and empowered.

As the twentieth century was coming to a close, the downsizing of Win Arn's Church Growth Inc. (formerly the Institute for American Church Growth),³⁶ and the closure of the Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth in 1995, left McGavran's movement without its primary avenue for communication and training.³⁷ Church Growth became diversified into specialization and subspecializations that has led to a variety of ministries promoted under the label Church Growth without necessarily reflecting the true heart of the Church Growth Movement as founded by McGavran.³⁸

An emphasis on church health began to surface on the horizon of the twenty-first-century. Rick Warren, in his popular book, *The Purpose Driven Church* (1995) says, "I believe the key issue for churches in the twenty-first century will be church health, not church growth...Focusing on growth alone misses the point. When congregations are healthy, they grow in the way God intends...they grow naturally."³⁹ Christian A.

³⁶ McGavran said that The Institute for American Church Growth, started by Win Arn, was the first spin off movement of the Church Growth Movement. See McGavran comments in an article by Tim Stafford, "The Father of Church Growth," *Missions Frontiers* 8, no. 1 (January 1986): 10, accessed February 25, 2014, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/08-1.pdf>. Win Arn published *The Master's Plan For Making Disciples* (1982) which outlined a church growth model for making disciples.

³⁷ C. Peter Wagner still occupied the McGavran Chair of Church Growth and was its spokesperson until he retired from it in 1999. The strength and impact of the movement began to decline after the death of Donald A. McGavran in 1990. The eventual downsizing of Church Growth Inc. and the closure of the Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth in 1995 was evidence of the diminishing influence of McGavran's movement.

³⁸ McIntosh, "Why Church Growth Can't Be Ignored," 21.

³⁹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

Schwarz, who wrote, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (1996) differentiates his concept with other church growth concepts by emphasizing: a rejection of a merely pragmatic approach and replacing it with a principle-oriented approach. Secondly, he focuses on the quality of church life as opposed to a quantitative approach. Finally, he emphasizes the release of growth automatisms (essential qualities that automatically grow as a result of the work of God) instead of trying to “make” the church grow.⁴⁰ Many who have embraced Natural Church Development have seemingly rejected Church Growth thought; however, church growth principles are ever present throughout the focus of building healthy churches. For this reason, the focus on church health may be akin to that of church growth and serve as a progression of the Church Growth Movement with the fundamental principles that McGavran propagated.

The Church Growth Movement endured much criticism concerning it being: overly pragmatic, methodologically reductionistic, lacking in theological depth, too Americanized in its business and marketing approach, focused more on results and structure rather than people, and too focused on the sociological tools used to reach people instead of the mission itself.⁴¹ However, the work of McGavran and the Church Growth Movement is very helpful when considering that churches must be indigenous in form and leadership, Spirit directed, and self-supporting if they are to multiply and

⁴⁰ Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Emmelsbul, Germany: C & P Publishing, 1996), 12-14.

⁴¹ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 71. See also, David J. Valleskey, “The Church Growth Movement: An Evaluation,” and Ed Stetzer, “What’s the Deal w/ the Church Growth Movement? Part 2: Some Unfortunate Evolutions,” *The Exchange* (blog), *Christianity Today*, October 8, 2012, accessed February 13, 2014, www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/october/whats-deal-w-church-growth-movement-part-2-some.html.

become a missionary force.⁴² Indigenous principles continued to be fueled through the Church Growth Movement. Both McGavran and Wagner made a positive impact on both small and large churches globally as well as within the United States. Vast and numerous criticisms may reflect genuine concerns within the movement, but most could not deny its historical impact upon the imperative of the church and its shaping of missiological thought.

IV. CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT

A revitalized interest in rapid church multiplication through the use of indigenous principles, or church planting movements (CPMs), began at the close of the twentieth century and continued into the twenty-first century. Bolstered by Roland Allen's principle of the spontaneous expansion of the church, which looked to the apostle Paul's approach to planting numerous churches over a short period of time, and Donald McGavran's people-movement observations, in which new believers become "God's bridges" to reaching others in their society, church-planting movements seemed to be overtly revealed by God. Mike Barnett says,

To clarify, this was not so much a realized plan or missionary-initiated strategy as it was a surprise from God! In a sense, once the church returned to the real purpose of the mission of God – to reach the unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ – the Holy Spirit returned to his business of extending his kingdom through church-multiplication movements.⁴³

The Holy Spirit is given due credit for the extension of the kingdom of God through church planting movements. However, the various documentations of CPMs around the world have compelled missionaries and church planters alike to seek God for

⁴² Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 71.

⁴³ Mike Barnett, "The Global Century," in *Discovering The Mission Of God*, ed. Mike Barnett and Robin Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 302.

such a movement within both local and global mission fields. David Garrison, more than any other missiologist, has aroused a broad interest in CPMs through his observations and study of them in diverse settings. The focus of his research was on the internal qualities of these movements and of the churches that reproduce to form the movements.⁴⁴ His book *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (2004) as well as other publications of his research and examples of CPMs have become a catalyst in the desire to launch church planting movements around the world.⁴⁵ In his book, Garrison mentions ten universal elements found in every Church Planting Movement:

1. Extraordinary Prayer
2. Abundant Evangelism
3. Intentional Planting of Reproducing Churches
4. The Authority of God's Word
5. Local Leadership
6. Lay Leadership
7. House Churches
8. Churches Planting Churches
9. Rapid Reproduction
10. Healthy Churches

These ten elements, according to Garrison, are "invaluable to anyone wishing to align themselves with the ways God is at work."⁴⁶ It is noteworthy to recognize that both indigenous and church growth principles are interweaved throughout these ten elements. Each movement appears to build upon the former.

⁴⁴ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 72.

⁴⁵ See, for example, David Garrison, "10 Church Planting Movement FAQs," *Mission Frontiers* 33, no. 2 (March-April 2011): 9-11, accessed February 25, 2014, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/33-2.pdf>. See also, David Garrison, "The 10 Universal Factors in Church Planting Movements Today," in *Nexus: The World House Church Movement Reader*, ed. Rad Zdero (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007), 269-272.

⁴⁶ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Arkadelphia, AR: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 172.

Greg Gilbert, in his book review of Garrison's book, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost Word* (2004), commends three aspects of CPM strategy: urgency, indigenous churches, and house churches. However, he is concerned about the insistence on rapidity in the development of leadership and the reproduction of the churches. The long-term effect could have negative repercussions in the production of leaders that are not solidly grounded in Biblical doctrines and beliefs.⁴⁷ This is a valid concern. The rapid reproduction of churches and leadership are possible if the first wave of leaders and the initial church planted are well grounded in the word of God and are continually being disciplined and developed in their maturity. Then they can do the same with the new leadership potential in the continually and rapidly reproducing churches. Stan Parks says, "A Church-Planting Movement (CPM) is in many ways actually a church leadership multiplication and development movement. The difference between planting churches and seeing sustained movements is usually linked to leadership development."⁴⁸ If a foundational base and a well-developed structure cannot be established, the long-term could be disastrous in the halting of the movement and the faltering away of leadership and churches.⁴⁹ Rapid reproduction is great, but it must be built on a foundation that will last so that the movement does not inverse and become a rapid reduction of churches planted.

⁴⁷ Greg Gilbert, review of *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World*, by David Garrison, *9Marks: Building Healthy Churches*, March 5, 2010, accessed February 13, 2014, www.9marks.org/books/book-review-church-planting-movements-david-garrison.

⁴⁸ Stan Parks, "A Church-Planting Movement is a Leadership Movement," *Missions Frontiers* 34, no. 4 (July-August, 2012): 24-26, accessed February 25, 2014, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/34-4-july-august-2012-entire-ssue.pdf>.

⁴⁹ The initial church and its oversight are significant in being able to continually help the new leaders and churches in the movement continue to mature and grow in the word and in their ministry. The initial church and leadership development may require more time to be solidly grounded before they are able, as mature leaders, to adequately disciple all the new leaders in the movement. Mature leaders and a solid structure may allow the rapid reproduction of leadership and churches that follow.

David Garrison believes Church Planting Movements are important because God is mightily at work in them drawing millions of people to disciple-building relationships with Jesus Christ, and in so doing revealing God's glory to multitudes.⁵⁰ The twenty-first century is experiencing various CPMs around the world that inspire and challenge missiology today. Though the universal elements within CPMs are desirable, they will not always manifest in the same way on every mission field. Too many external factors must be considered when praying for or engaging in a CPM. These factors might include: the spiritual climate, indigenous and cultural beliefs, historical factors concerning the church and missions, attitudes towards outsiders, and the socio-political climate. However, as a Spirit-led movement, God has the freedom to extend His kingdom in any way He sees fit. What missionary or church planter would not want to be part of that? May a humble and contrite spirit allow the eyes to be opened and gaze upon the wonders of God!

V. HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT

The House Church Movement can arguably be seen as part of the Church Planting Movement; however, there are certain factors that set it apart. CPM groups may continue to meet in homes or convenient locations as house churches, or they may become part of a more traditional church model, cell group based church model, or even reflect other models of church.⁵¹ House churches within the House Church Movement (HCM) tend to be small, multiplying groups of believers that may network with one another, yet remain

⁵⁰ David Garrison, "Church-Planting Movements," in Barnett, 462-464.

⁵¹ Neill Mims, "Church Models And How They Mix (Or Not) With church-Planting Movements," *Mission Frontiers* 34, no. 4 (July-August 2012): 29, accessed February 25, 2014, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/34-4-july-august-2012-entire-ssue.pdf>.

distanced from more traditional, or institutional, forms of church. Though they are house churches, they may also be referred to as simple churches, organic churches, or missional churches.⁵² In *Houses that Change the World: The Return of the House Churches* (1999), Wolfgang Simson says,

The nature of church is not reflected in a constant series of religious meetings led by professional clergy in holy places specially reserved to experience Jesus. Rather it is the prophetic way followers of Christ live their everyday life in spiritual extended families...and in the place where it counts most – in their homes.⁵³

Frank Viola, in his book *Finding Organic Church: A Comprehensive Guide to Starting and Sustaining Authentic Christian Communities* (2009) says,

By *organic church*, I mean a church that is born out of spiritual life instead of being constructed by human institutions and held together by religious programs. Organic church life is a grassroots experience that is marked by face-to-face community, every-member functioning, open-participatory meetings (as opposed to pastor-to-pew services), nonhierarchical leadership, and the centrality and supremacy of Jesus Christ as the functional Leader and Head of the gathering.⁵⁴

Rad Zdero, in his book *The Global House Church Movement* (2004) says,

House churches are an attempt to get back to the form and function of apostolic Christianity...They are volunteer-led meetings involving prayer and worship, Bible study and discussion, mentoring and outreach, as well as food and fun...they are typically autonomous....⁵⁵

In *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (2005), Neil Cole says, “We want to lower the bar of how church is done and raise the bar of what it means to be a

⁵² Tony Dale, Felicity Dale and George Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant: Why Small Is the New Big for Today's Church* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 9.

⁵³ Wolfgang Simson, *Houses that Change the World: The Return of the House Churches* (1999, Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Lifestyle, 2001), xv.

⁵⁴ Frank Viola, *Finding Organic Church: A Comprehensive Guide to Starting and Sustaining Authentic Christian Communities* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 20.

⁵⁵ Rad Zdero, *The Global House Church Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2004), 4.

disciple.”⁵⁶ The HCM churches, leaders and representative authors tend to focus on the dynamics of a smaller group setting, without hierarchical structures, to fulfill the Great Commission mandate to “make disciples” through their network of friends, family and those within their circle of influence. Fellow believers, as part of the priesthood of all believers, are all on equal footing without need for the formality of clergy and hierarchical ministry roles. Local leaders within the group may be viewed more as facilitators, lay leaders or lay pastors. However, they are generally seen as co-equals within the group under the Lordship of Christ. Itinerant or mobile workers within HCM networks are welcome to give instruction, teach and train. Their function is often seen as following the New Testament church apostolic pattern of the apostle Paul planting and visiting various churches, but not overseeing the individual churches.⁵⁷

There is an overwhelming de-emphasis on institutional and other models of church in the HCM. Many in the HCM had negative experiences in institutional churches and thus justify the whole precept of house churches being the New Testament pattern to follow. This sense is felt throughout much of the HCM literature. James H. Rutz, in the forward to *The Global House Church Movement*, says,

Unlike me, Rad is not a fire-belching enthusiast who incinerates the old traditional Protestant church with every other breath. He’s kind and fair. Yet he shows you with great clarity the stark contrast between exciting, biblical churches meeting in homes vs. the programmed, professionally run, straitjacketed, spectator church you probably grew up in.⁵⁸

This attitude creates a spirit of independence and a breach in the unity of the body of Christ. It appears that underlying much of the HCM literature is a message for

⁵⁶ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 26.

⁵⁷ See, Rad Zdero, *The Global House Church Movement*, 99-103. See also, Frank Viola, *Finding Organic Church*, 158-159.

⁵⁸ Zdero, *The Global House Church Movement*, xiii.

disgruntled Christians who have either left or are still participating in a traditional type of church. A defensiveness of the HCM position is apparent in the reverse psychological approach of recognizing the value and worth of traditional churches. Too many justifications may be indicators of unresolved issues. And it is those issues, unresolved, that may eventually bring the chapter of the House Church Movement, as seen in the dawning of the twenty-first century, to closure in the historical annals of ecclesiastical and missiological approach to church planting.

House churches are able to multiply rapidly, but they can also be taken over by unhealthy leaders or false teachers which could lead to a shorter lifespan than traditional churches.⁵⁹ A vibrant house church usually has a strong leader, but this same leader may not be very good at developing other leaders to start new groups. Often the same leader will run multiple groups which could lead to overload.⁶⁰ The idea of strong leadership creates an irony in the HCM. Strong leadership is required to keep the house church running, growing and multiplying. However, strong, hierarchical type of leadership is de-emphasized as all are considered equal under the headship of Christ. This irony creates blockage to leadership development because continual leadership development creates a hierarchy of leadership, whether formal or informal, by default. Responsibility in leadership requires continual discipleship, at all levels of spiritual maturity, so that the kingdom of God will continue to spread over all the earth through the multiplication of churches and leadership. Opposition to the traditional church models and hierarchy of leadership impedes the HCM from developing a structure that can facilitate strong leadership development. The very essence of discipleship, which is a noteworthy focus in

⁵⁹ Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 115.

⁶⁰ Mims, "Church Models And How They Mix (Or Not) With church-Planting Movements," 17.

the HCM, may diminish after conversion and establishment in a house church. Will the new Christians within the house church be able to mature and given opportunity to lead and start new groups? Who will disciple them? After a few generations⁶¹ of leadership development, a hierarchy of leadership would have most likely already formed. The movement must evolve with its growth so that it can minister to all the needs within the network and fulfill its purpose. If the leadership structure does not evolve, it will most likely collapse into independent house churches without form or direction.

Though the HCM has absorbed many criticisms and has been a movement of concern to many outside of the HCM, it has made a great impact in building relationships within a small group setting and reaching loved ones, friends and colleagues within ones respective community with the gospel. It has challenged the traditional church to rethink its purpose and form in order to focus on the most pertinent things in relationship with Jesus, His word and the body of Christ. It has also brought to the forefront the need for the whole body of Christ to forgive, reconcile and accept one another in the pursuit to bring glory to God through His Church and its unity.

VI. CONCLUSION

A brief look at significant movements and key personalities involved were considered in this chapter: An indigenous approach to church planting, the Church Growth Movement, the Church Planting Movement, and the House Church Movement have all contributed greatly to the development and propagation of the church. A common thread of indigenous principles can be seen interwoven throughout all of these

⁶¹ The term “generations” here is used to refer to the ones disciplined who have also disciplined others (3 generations) and so forth...etc. It is not referring to a fixed period of time.

movements. Significant authors in each of these movements referred back to the principles set forth by Roland Allen in his books. It is amazing how an Anglican missionary had such influence that his principles communicated across the barriers of time, culture, and denominationalisms. A common chord has been the practices and principles of the Apostle Paul during the first century. However, should the church today desire to go back and practice those same, often subjectively interpreted, principles? Yes, the church should adopt those same Biblical principles. No, the church should not advertently function the same way. The local church has gone through a variety of historical and church growth movements that challenge the church in its present-day endeavors. This historical foundation focused on the extension of the kingdom of God through church planting, and in doing so, created a dynamic for a twenty-first century approach to the expedition of the local church. The church is ever emerging as the years and centuries continue to progress forward. The word of God is the foundation of the church. The Holy Spirit is the teacher and the force compelling and propelling the church. History is a guide of testimonies and lessons for the church. The movements of God are a sign of His grace upon the church. The actuality from whence the church came, its present reality, and where the church is heading must inform its understanding of where it is and where it is to go. The church throughout history always moves forward. Therefore, repetition of the past should not be the goal. Soaring into the future is its destiny!

CHAPTER 4

DYNAMICS OF CHURCHES THAT PLANT CHURCHES

I. OVERVIEW

What is the primary mission of the church? Those involved in church planting and church growth tend to lean in the same direction. David J. Hesselgrave (born 1924) sums it up as follows: “The primary mission of the church and, therefore, of churches is to proclaim the gospel of Christ and gather believers into local churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective in service; thus new congregations are to be planted throughout the world.”¹ Churches need to grow and multiply like a wave covering the earth. The momentum of the wave is found in the wave. Newly planted churches propel the planting of newer churches. If the continual planting of churches ceases, the wave dies, and those churches within the wave become stagnant in the vitality of planting more churches. Sodalities must come in to stir the water so that the mission may continue. However, if the church could be stirred once again it would reproduce itself over and over causing a new wave to form.

Churches planting churches. The resonating commission of scripture affirms this endeavor, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”² The desire to see lives changed for the glory of God, the gospel message proclaimed, and the body of believers established wherever that message is proclaimed can only lead to

¹ David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 17.

² Matthew 28:19-20 (New International Version).

the establishment of churches. Embracing this vision compels one to seek out how this can be done.

The importance of relationships, evangelization, multiplication of churches, spiritual dynamics, raising local leaders and faith will be explored in this chapter through the lens of various authors as well as church planters in Brazil.³ A comparative case study of these church planters was conducted through personal contact and a *Church Planting Questionnaire* created by the author.⁴ Vinay Samuels, in *Mission as Transformation*, recognizes that “Mission is more of a journey than event. Mission is mission on the way – inviting people to take part in the journey.”⁵ The *Church Planting Questionnaire* was developed from the journey of the author in church planting and his desire to help facilitate his colleagues to experience mission as transformation and live it in the vision of the multiplication of churches.

³ The church planters in Brazil consist of four people including the author who has overseen the planting of five churches; three in the state of Sao Paulo and two in the state of Minas Gerias. The other three church planters consist of two Singaporeans and one Malaysian sent from Victory Family Centre church in Singapore with a vision to plant 25 churches in two years. Names have been changed in this paper to protect their identity. However, they are given pseudo names for the purpose of interacting in this review. George is planting churches in the state of Santa Catarina. Jack is planting churches in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and Kory is planting churches in the state of Espirito Santo. All three men are presently, at the time of this writing, living in Brazil and have their wives and children with them on the mission field. They each have a three year commitment on this mission field.

⁴ The author met with the three church planters during a Latin American Conference of Churches hosted by *Associação de Igrejas Evangélicas Transculturais – AIET* (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches) in the city of Pouso Alegre, the state of Minas Gerias, Brazil. This conference lasted from October 11-14, 2012. At this conference, the author interviewed the three church planters about their church planting vision and specific works in Brazil. Kory had been in Brazil for about one year while George and Jack had been in Brazil for eight months. All three church planters agreed to participate in the Church Planting Questionnaire which would be sent to them the following year (2013) to give more time for them to engage in their church planting vision. A blank copy of the *Church Planting Questionnaire*, created by the author and sent to them on June 20, 2013, can be found in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 contains a summary of the responses of Kory to the questionnaire. George’s responses to the questionnaire are summarized in Appendix 3. The responses of Jack to the questionnaire are summarized in Appendix 4.

⁵ Vinay Samuel, “Mission as Transformation,” in *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*, ed. Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 1999), 229.

II. RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships start with people, and God sends his people to all the peoples of the earth. “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ...so that all nations might believe and obey him.”⁶ Donald McGavran says that “all nations” in both Romans 16:25-26 and Matthew 28:19, *panta ta ethne* in Greek, should read “all peoples.” The Apostle Paul was considering cultural groupings – tongues, tribes, castes, and lineages.⁷ Peter Wagner says that The Church Growth Movement sees *panta ta ethne* as referring to “significant groups of people in the world who have not yet been reached with the gospel.”⁸ Jose Míguez Bonino (1924-2012) ties in the historical thread of what both Donald McGavran and Peter Wagner are saying:

Already the prophetic trajectory present in Genesis included “all the families of the earth” in the purpose of God (Gen. 12:1-3) in creating in Abraham a chosen people. That salvific relationship toward “the people” (*ta ethne*) received a classic expression in Isaiah 2:2-4. That “blessing” extending from Israel to “the peoples” was not transformed into mission – announcement and invitation – in Judaism until around the year 300 B.C. “Proselytes” were forerunners of that mission which for Luke is the very meaning of the church’s existence.”⁹

The church exists for these relationships. God draws his people to reach out to *panta ta ethne*. This has always been God’s way of reaching people – through people. The church is a community of God’s people. It is his family. It is the family of all believers. This is significant in church planting, especially in Brazil. The family motif

⁶ Romans 16:25-26 (New International Version).

⁷ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 40.

⁸ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1981), 53.

⁹ Jose Míguez Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 100. Bonino was a liberation theologian and served as president of the World Council of Churches (WCC) from 1975-1983. His views differed from the conservative McGavran’s leaning towards the evangelistic mandate as opposed to Bonino’s leaning towards the cultural mandate. Both mandates are to be considered later in this chapter.

must transcend both the walls of the church and the home. William Read recognized this when he studied church growth in Brazil, “In the early records of these pioneer church planters, the importance of families and family relationships is mentioned time and time again. The Gospel grew along family lines.”¹⁰ Each church that was planted by the author during fourteen years in Brazil was planted and grew family by family. As the walls of the home were penetrated, not only did the church grow, but leaders were raised through the relationships developed. The Brazilian pastors now leading those churches, their participant family members and relatives in the church and the other families represented in the church are fruit of “the Gospel [growing] along family lines.”

Tony and Felicity Dale, proponents of the House Church Movement, believe that God is reforming the church from an event-based institution to becoming relationship-based.¹¹ Furthermore, they say, “...it is not the meeting itself that makes a church, but the relationships.”¹² Relationships both with God and the believers have always been the basis for the existence of the church. Expeditious church planting cannot ignore this fact. Birthing churches in the homes of Brazilian families accentuates this principle.

III. EVANGELIZATION

God desires for people to do His work, to fulfill His mission. Donald McGavran refers to the *missio Dei*, the mission of God, which is not about human activity, but about what God desires.¹³ What does God desire? Part of this could be understood in what Donald McGavran says of mission, “an enterprise devoted to proclaiming the good news

¹⁰ William Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 49.

¹¹ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale and George Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant: Why Small Is the New Big for Today's Church* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 30.

¹² Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 65.

¹³ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 20.

of Jesus Christ, and to persuading men and women to become his disciples and responsible members of his church.”¹⁴ The goal is to become part of God’s church. How? By hearing the proclamation of Jesus Christ, receiving Him, and being His disciple. Aubrey Malphurs observes that the Great Commission has essentially two components: evangelism and edification. He also mentions that a Great Commission church places a high priority on evangelism.¹⁵ There must be an evangelistic heart and vision in order to see a new church planted. This is why Donald McGavran also states that, “Evangelization is the chief and irreplaceable work of the church.”¹⁶ How can one become part of the family of God if he has not first been evangelized with the truth of the gospel? Peter Wagner believes that God calls his people to participate in the evangelistic mandate. He and John Stott (1921-2011) agreed upon a definition that sets forth its biblical ideal:

The *nature* of evangelism is the communication of the Good News.
The *purpose* of evangelism is to give individuals and groups valid opportunity to accept Jesus Christ.
The *goal* of evangelism is to persuade men and women to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to serve him in the fellowship of his Church.¹⁷

What could possibly impede a loving body of believers from the desire to fulfill the evangelistic mandate?

There is a balance to the weight of the evangelistic mandate upon every church and Christian. It is what Peter Wagner refers to as the cultural mandate.¹⁸ Its ideals are reflected well in the Lausanne Covenant, Article 5. A portion of Article 5, as it relates to salvation is as follows:

¹⁴ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 24.

¹⁵ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches For The 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 42.

¹⁶ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 65.

¹⁷ Wagner, *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel*, 56-57.

¹⁸ Wagner, *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel*, 12.

The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world.¹⁹

The cultural mandate is an imperative part of the Christian life. It cannot be ignored in the pursuit of expeditious church planting. Building the Church influences the social dynamic in the community in which churches are planted. “You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”²⁰

In Latin America, Jose Bonino notes, “...the attitude towards theological liberalism – debated at times as the conflict of priority options for evangelization or for social action, or as critique of the Social Gospel....”²¹ How would this concern affect church planting efforts in Brazil? Brazilians are sensitive to human needs and justice. It is very common for most churches to reach out to their communities socially. Church planters in Brazil should be aware that their church planting endeavors should have a strong evangelistic mandate but not to the neglect of the cultural mandate. Churches that are not sensitive to the social needs in their bairro²² will have a difficult time planting or growing their church. However, the evangelistic mandate should take precedence in church planting endeavors. Peter Wagner says,

The cultural mandate doesn’t save. That is why, in the total sweep of Christian mission and the kingdom of God, the evangelistic mandate is primary...No evangelistic mandate - no light. No evangelistic mandate - no salt. In other words,

¹⁹ John Stott, *The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 25.

²⁰ Matthew 28:20 (New International Version).

²¹ Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*, 44.

²² A bairro is a neighborhood in Brazil. A large Brazilian city would typically have numerous bairros within the city limits.

without the prior operation of the evangelistic mandate, there would be no one to work on fulfilling the other part of holistic mission-the cultural mandate.²³

Roland Allen was a bit more adamant about social work,

We have now had many years' experience of that method of approach, and it is becoming increasingly plain, it is, indeed, already commonly acknowledged, that the Church has not, by these social activities, brought men in any great degree within the sphere of its spiritual influence...Social reform is not necessarily Christian, and schemes for the amelioration of the conditions of life certainly do not necessarily lead men to Christ...²⁴

It is true that social reform, social action and even social service will not spiritually save anyone. Only Jesus Christ can save the person who is lost. However, it behooves the Christian to express her faith in meeting the felt-needs of human beings whom she encounters. This will testify to a great Savior and Lord.

IV. MULTIPLICATION OF CHURCHES

The map of the city was laid across the table. Hours of strategy on how to reach the city for Jesus was bathed in prayer. Then it was as if a still small voice spoke and said, "Would you rather have one church of 7,000 or 100 churches of 70?" It was a crossroads moment for this missionary church planter. Would he pursue a large church planting model or multiple small churches? Which would have a greater impact upon the society for the glory of God? Which did God want him to pursue? God was silent. Which could more easily be multiplied by local leadership? He found his answer.²⁵

²³ Wagner, *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel*, 101.

²⁴ Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It* (1927, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1962), 81.

²⁵ This was an actual experience by the author while praying over the city of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The personal conviction to see multiple churches planted rather than focusing on one larger church was solidified during this experience.

A. THE CHALLENGE OF MULTIPLICATION

Donald McGavran says, "Today's supreme task is the effective multiplication of churches in the receptive societies of earth."²⁶ He is correct in his assessment; however, unreceptive societies, with their unique challenges, must not be neglected. Whether church planting moves along at a rapid or slower pace, it must never-the-less move forward in its pursuit to multiply churches to "all peoples." Peter Wagner adds another dimension to the thoughts of Donald McGavran with the inclusion of social concerns, "The best starting point for the vigorous and effective implementation of Christian social concerns is to win multitudes of people to Christ and multiply Christian churches."²⁷ Peter Wagner's recognition of the cultural mandate may be a significant key in reaching unreceptive societies with the gospel. Recognizing the social concerns of a community and ministering to those very needs could turn unreceptive hearts into receptive hearts. These receptive hearts will be able to penetrate the unreceptive soil of the community and result with the establishment of new churches.

The challenge of the multiplication of churches is beckoning, but what must take place in order for that to happen? Donald McGavran refers to a process called a "People Movement."

Peoples become Christian as a wave of decision for Christ sweeps through the group mind, involving many individual decisions but being far more than merely their sum. This may be called a chain reaction. Each decision sets off others and the sum total powerfully affects every individual. When conditions are right, not merely each sub-group, but the entire group concerned decides together.²⁸

²⁶ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 31.

²⁷ Wagner, *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel*, 116.

²⁸ Donald Anderson McGavran, *The Bridges Of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1955), 12-13.

What pastor, missionary and church planter would not love to see a “People Movement” happen within his or her own field of ministry? However, the “wave of decision for Christ” may not always be a quick moving wave. Donald McGavran says in his book “Understanding Church Growth,”

...what frequently happens in people movements is that relatively small, well-instructed groups – one this month and one several months later – become Christians. Numbers are achieved, to be sure, but usually only with the passage of time...A people movement results from the joint decision of a number of individuals all from the same people group, which enables them to become Christians without social dislocation, while remaining in full contact with their non-Christian relatives, thus enabling other segments of that people group, across the years, after suitable instruction, to come to similar decisions and form Christian churches made up exclusively of members of that people.²⁹

A strategy of reaching people within the same people group is revealed through the observations of McGavran. Still, today, families are reached for Christ through one member of the family. Communities are reached for Christ through families within that community. But is this an absolute on how to grow the church? Is this how one must approach expeditious church planting in Brazil or anywhere else in the world?

Evangelical church growth has swept throughout Brazil, but “growth has been predominantly in urban areas, where large populations are found.”³⁰ This observation by William Read in the nineteen sixties is still relevant today. Myriad of Brazilians have moved to the major cities, over the years, in search for work and a better way of life. It has resulted in families and peoples moving away from their people group to cities with populations numbering multiple millions. A lesson here can be learned from the growth of the Assemblies of God in Brazil.

²⁹ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 223.

³⁰ Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil*, 126.

The great growth of the Assemblies of God in Brazil came as a result of bold plans for church growth carried out by the common people. An essential element of these plans was the conviction that wherever believers went, it was their duty and privilege to win their fellows to similar belief in the Lord and to bind them together in a regularly worshiping, praying, praising, and evangelizing congregation.³¹

Church growth and church planting happens through “People Movements” within family units and “individuals all from the same people group.” However, church growth and church planting is not limited to “individuals all from the same people group.” In Brazilian urban centers this is particularly noticed. As Christian Brazilians moved to industrious cities they physically moved and shared their faith with those in their new community. New relationships were formed and new churches were planted. Today, Brazilian migration to the cities leaves Christian Brazilians multiple options of established evangelical churches and the option to start their own church.

Tony and Felicity Dale believe in the “house church” or “simple church” model which consists of a small group of believers that continue to multiply.³² Donald McGavran recognizes that the Pentecostals in Brazil met in house churches, rented halls, and cheap small chapels in their own neighborhoods.³³ However, Donald McGavran recognizes that many of these churches in Brazil eventually grew and purchased their own property and buildings; whereas, Tony and Felicity Dale want to continue with a multiplying small church model. Continuing with a small church model or starting with a small church pioneer work that evolves into a more developed and larger church model should not be in debate. Both models are valid as long as they continue to multiply. Nevertheless, Tony and Felicity Dale said, “...we considered a number of reasons that

³¹ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 285.

³² Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 9.

³³ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 219.

seemed to indicate that we, too, should multiply small churches rather than seeking to get larger.”³⁴ They also said,

A community of believers can grow to the point where it has to give birth to a daughter. Here, according to those with experience of rapidly multiplying church planting movements, the shorter the reproduction time (six months is a good length of time), the less likely it is to cause problems for those in the group.³⁵

This is a good point, but should not underestimate the value of larger and more established churches who are experiencing or desire to experience rapidly multiplying church planting movements. Church growth in this instance can be seen as both growing in numbers of churches planted and growing in numbers of members within each congregation.

Donald McGavran defined a “People Movement.” What are Church Planting Movements? David Garrison defines it as, “...a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.”³⁶ He also adheres to the principle that “smaller is better.”³⁷ Whereas Donald McGavran and Peter Wagner recognize the value of large churches in the Church Growth Movement; David Garrison, Tony Dale and Felicity Dale feel that smaller churches are a better way to multiply churches to the degree that a Church Planting Movement may develop. Both points of view focus on the multiplication of churches. The important point is that churches need to plant churches. Large churches can plant multiple small churches with the vision that those churches will grow both in numbers and reproduction. Small churches cannot limit their reproduction to their size. Reproduction is not based upon

³⁴ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 13.

³⁵ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 210.

³⁶ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Arkadelphia, AR: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 21.

³⁷ Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 25.

size, it is based upon giving birth to something new. If churches are accustomed to giving birth to new churches, they will continue to give birth – whether they are a numerically large or small church.

Is the church reproducible? Donald McGavran says, "...the congregation should be of such structure and pattern that common people can operate it and multiply it indefinitely among the masses."³⁸ A simple pattern for church is easily replicated. If the church is going to multiply rapidly, years of training for Bible teachers will not be sufficient.³⁹ Tony and Felicity Dale are correct in their assessment; however, years of training and discipling are still needed – especially for Biblical teachers. They were impressed with a Filipino church planter who said, "I never do anything in church that a one-week old Christian would be unable to do."⁴⁰ Is it really wise that a church planter only do things in church that a one-week old Christian could do? People need to grow. People need both the milk and the meat of the Word of God. If the rapid multiplication of churches results in shallow teaching and a weak Biblical foundation will it not be like building the house (of God) on the sand instead the rock – a solid foundation? A system is needed where churches can multiply rapidly as well as spend a sufficient amount of time, even years, training and discipling their potential Bible teachers, leaders and pastors. One must determine what it means to be reproducible before one can determine the velocity of reproduction.

A reproducing church is an expanding church. Roland Allen explains spontaneous expansion as follows:

³⁸ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 219.

³⁹ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 71.

⁴⁰ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 71.

I mean the expansion which follows the unexhorted and unorganized activity of individual members of the Church explaining to others the Gospel which they have found for themselves; I mean the expansion which follows the irresistible attraction of the Christian Church for men who see its ordered life, and are drawn to it by desire to discover the secret of a life which they instinctively desire to share; I mean also, the expansion of the Church by the addition of new churches.⁴¹

Roland Allen puts together both local church growth and the reproduction of that church by the addition of new churches. Both the Church Growth Movement and the Church Planting Movements can appreciate the wisdom of Roland Allen in his definition of spontaneous expansion. Multiple church planting cannot happen without “spontaneous expansion.” People want to be part of something that is real, vibrant and relevant to their lives and the world in which they live. Young Christians have great zeal that should be utilized in the expansion of the church, not repressed with standards in which seemingly “mature” Christians often fall short. Believers need to recognize their potential to expand the church through growth and multiplication, then they will be prepared to reproduce themselves in others and their church in other geographical locations both in their home nation and abroad. Indigenous principles must be active in their local setting as well as future church plant endeavors.

Rufus Anderson, speaking of the Apostle Paul, says,

It appears to have been a settled point with him, that a church once fairly planted and organized, with a proper arrangement for the pastoral care, might be safely left to itself, under the supervising grace of God. This, as will readily be seen, is a point of vital importance in the missionary work. Had not the apostolic idea of self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating churches dropped out of the Christian mind so soon after the age of the apostles, not to be fully regained until modern times, how very different had been the history of Christendom, and of the world!⁴²

⁴¹ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 7.

⁴² Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner and Company, 1869), 49.

Rufus Anderson saw the indigenous principles in the Apostle Paul's ministry. David Garrison feels that Church Planting Movements, though not mentioned in the Bible, are seen flowing through the New Testament and "issue from the very life and ministry of Christ."⁴³ Could it be that there has only truly been one Church Planting Movement that began with the persecution in Jerusalem and has not stopped since then?⁴⁴ Furthermore, the challenge of the church would be the multiplication of this movement into many and various sub-movements as seen throughout history and is ever present today. Should the church desire to start another "Church Planting Movement" or continue the one that began with Christ and was sparked through the persecution in Jerusalem? Is a "Church Growth Movement" or "Church Planting Movement" what the church really needs, or does the church need a Great Commission renewal? Did not the Apostle Paul fulfill the Great Commission to the best of his ability? Rufus Anderson sees the Apostle Paul as planting self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches. If Rufus Anderson is correct, the history of the Christian church would be different today. The movement and the growth of the church would never have stagnated in the history of the world. Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn and Roland Allen are historic voices that beckon the church today to embrace indigenous principles in the spread of the gospel and the multiplication of churches worldwide.⁴⁵

⁴³ Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 219.

⁴⁴ Acts 8:1, 4.

⁴⁵ All three authors are significant in the formation of the indigenous principles: self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating (self-extending). Though they were confronting missions organizations and societies in the mid-1800's through the early 1900's, their indigenous principles have been adopted by many church planters throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century. Therefore, the author considers their voice historic possibly even prophetic for the expansion of the church through church planting endeavors. A fourth "self" has been added to the previous three, self-theologizing. However, as relevant as self-theologizing is to maturing and developing churches worldwide, it is subsequent, in this authors opinion, to the previous three "selves," and therefore beyond the scope of this thesis which focuses on expeditious church planting.

The early church serves as a model and historical marker of what not only has been done in and through the church, but what still can be done in and through the church today. Roland Allen mentions how the church expanded in the early centuries by organizing the little groups that were converted,

It was itself a unity composed of a multitude of little churches any one of which could propagate itself...By a simple act the new group was brought into the unity of the Church, and equipped, as its predecessors had been equipped, not only with all the spiritual power and authority necessary for its own life as an organized unit, but also with all the authority needed to repeat the same process whenever one of its members might convert men in any new village or town.⁴⁶

The early church was active in the spread of the gospel and planting of new churches. It was attentive to the responsibility of raising-up local leadership with the vision to expand the reach of the gospel to the surrounding regions. The ministries of the church were supported through the giving of the believers. Melvin Hodges describes the indigenous church as follows,

The New Testament church then was first, self-propagating; that is, it had within it sufficient vitality so that it could extend throughout the region and neighboring regions by its own efforts. It produced its own workers and the work was spread abroad by the effort of the Christians themselves. Second, it was self-governing; that is, it was governed by men who were raised up by the Holy Spirit from among the converts in the locality. Third, it was self-supporting; it did not depend on foreign money in order to meet the expenses of the work.⁴⁷

This is a church that can be reproduced. The challenge to expeditious church planting must be tempered with the need for that very church to reproduce itself. Indigenous principles are the tools that will allow continual multiplication of churches, not only in Brazil, but globally. Churches planting churches starts with the first church to be planted,

⁴⁶ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 143.

⁴⁷ Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (1953; repr., Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1996), 12.

and then continues to multiply. It is not just a method or an act that can be done, it is a belief and a conviction that must be done.

B. THE PRAXIS OF MULTIPLICATION

Kory, George and Jack are each in a different Brazilian geographical state with a vision to multiply churches.⁴⁸ Their home church, Victory Family Centre, in Singapore has sent them to Brazil to plant 25 churches in 25 different cities in two years. They each had a team that included four Singaporeans and one Brazilian to go with them to help them plant churches during the first year. A total of six people were on their church-planting team including the leader (Kory, George or Jack).⁴⁹ During their year in Brazil they went out two by two to evangelize, start new churches in homes, and train leaders for each new church. The team members returned to Singapore after nine months to one year and the leader stayed in Brazil to complete his three year commitment. Their goal was to plant new churches as well as train leaders and pastors to run each church that is planted. They hope to have 25 pastors with assistants in two years. Their vision is clearly the multiplication of churches through churches planting churches.⁵⁰

Leadership development is also a major part of their vision. Kory mentioned he needs to raise-up 25 pastors and at least 125 leaders in order to fulfill the vision.⁵¹ George

⁴⁸ Kory, George, and Jack. 2012. Interview by author. Pouso Alegre, Minas Geras, Brazil. October 11-14. Interviews took place during a Latin American Conference of Churches hosted by *Associação de Igrejas Evangélicas Transculturais – AIET* (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches). Their vision to plant multiple churches originated in Victory Family Centre, Singapore. Rick Seaward and the leadership of VFC cast this vision to the church. Kory, George and Jack responded affirmatively to the vision.

⁴⁹ Kory, George, and Jack. 2012. Interview by author. Pouso Alegre, Minas Geras, Brazil. October 11-14. Family members are with them on the mission field, but are not considered part of the team of six whose focus is on the planting of churches and development of leaders.

⁵⁰ See Appendices 2, 3, and 4. In order to be in proximity of the newer churches planted, they plan to move their residence, including their families, every six months.

⁵¹ See Appendix 2.

feels that he needs to raise-up at least a pastor for each church planted and a few people trained in church planting.⁵² Jack said he needs to raise-up 25 leaders and their assistants.⁵³ All of them feel that they need to raise-up a pastor for each church planted and at least some other leaders.

All three church planters feel that some of the strengths in the vision show the urgency to fulfill the Great Commission and the need of the multiplication of churches.⁵⁴ In fact, Jack even went on to say that the churches they plant should reproduce themselves like rabbits.⁵⁵ Kory recognized that the vision empowers and enables the local members to be leaders and church planters.⁵⁶

These three church planters are running with a vision that is beyond them. This is a vision that only the Holy Spirit could help them fulfill. Their zeal for the vision compelled them to respond to the need in Brazil. Donald McGavran says, "...today's paramount task, opportunity, and imperative is to multiply churches in the increasing numbers of receptive peoples of all six continents."⁵⁷ The hope of these three church planters is that the people in Brazil will be receptive and that the vision will be fulfilled through them. Roland Allen observed this type of zeal in other Christians,

This spontaneous activity of the individual, rooted as it is in a universal instinct, and in a Grace of the Holy Spirit given to all Christians, is not peculiar to any one age or race. We are familiar with it today. It constantly shows itself, and it would repeat the history of the early Church, if it were not that our fears have set up barriers in the way of its proper fruition... What we see today is the spontaneous

⁵² See Appendix 3.

⁵³ See Appendix 4.

⁵⁴ See Appendices 2, 3, and 4.

⁵⁵ See Appendix 4. This is an apparent reference to "The Rabbit and the Elephant", a book written by Tony and Felicity Dale. This book was chosen as one of the books considered in this chapter because of its influence on church planting strategies including those utilized by Victory Family Centre in Singapore.

⁵⁶ See Appendix 2.

⁵⁷ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 40.

zeal of Christians attempting to repeat, so far as they can, the early history of the Christian Church.⁵⁸

Observers of these three church planters are filled with admiration and hope as well as concern. Experience may help develop maturity, but can also, at times, impede faith.

Who would want to impede the faith of those desiring to soar?

What if the people in Brazil are not receptive, or at least not as receptive as they had hoped? George feels the timeframe given to achieve the goals, new churches every few months, is a bit unrealistic. He believes that quality and sustainability should not be overlooked for the cause of speed.⁵⁹ Jack feels that the vision needs to do a better job of closing the gap between theory and reality.⁶⁰ In other words, the ideal of the vision is not always the reality of what is happening on the field. George affirms what Jack feels by saying that the assumptions to achieve the goals seem too simplified and not realizable in a practical based situation. His premise is based upon his personal first-hand experience.⁶¹ Kory recognizes that family constraints, availability of the members and a shift in mindset on how to plant churches may cause delays in the timeframe of the vision being fulfilled.⁶² All three church planters struggle with the ideal of the vision and the reality of fulfilling the vision on the mission field.

Could Jack, Kory and George be struggling with the quantitative expectations of the vision as compared to the qualitative results of continuing with the vision even well after they have left the mission field? What is more important, quantity or quality?

Donald McGavran says, “As soon as we separate quality from the deepest passion of the

⁵⁸ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 144.

⁵⁹ See Appendix 3.

⁶⁰ See Appendix 4.

⁶¹ See Appendix 3.

⁶² See Appendix 2.

Lord - to seek and save the lost – it ceases to be Christian quality.”⁶³ There is no doubt that salvation is the priority. This fact is a great motivation towards quantity in all facets of Christian ministry. However, lack of quality, in the long-run, impedes growth and sustainability. George recognizes this ever-present reality. He not only desires to see 25 churches planted with their own pastors and leaders, he wants them to continue to exist and plant new churches for years to come.⁶⁴ The challenge of the vision which compelled these three men to go to Brazil may have been quantitative, but the reality of the vision on the mission field has made it qualitative. Future hopes determine present actions.

V. RAISING LOCAL LEADERS

Leadership development starts with the church planter, missionary or local pastor. Melvin Hodges says that workers learn much more from the attitude than the words of their leaders. He goes on to say, “Through such contacts the missionary gains opportunities of imparting not only his knowledge but also his own spirit and vision.”⁶⁵ If George, Kory and Jack can impart their vision to see 25 churches planted with at least 25 pastors and a number of leaders in each church to their first receptive contacts and potential leaders, then the vision will continue on even if they do not see its fulfillment within two years. They want to see it happen within two years, but more importantly is that it does happen through local leadership. If the local leaders receive the vision and make it their own – it will happen eventually, even if it takes much longer.

Roland Allen has a thought-provoking view of the early church as it relates to ministry involvement of the members,

⁶³ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 33.

⁶⁴ See Appendix 3.

⁶⁵ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 69.

It was an organism which grew by its own spontaneous activity...the organization of a missionary body. Consequently there was no special organization for missions in the Early Church; the church organization sufficed. It was simple and complete. There was abundant room in it for the expression of the spontaneous individual activity of its members; for every member was potentially a missionary; and the Church, as an organized body, expected that activity and knew how to act when its members did their duty. With the activity of its members, it grew simply by multiplying its bishops.⁶⁶

If the churches that Jack, George and Kory plant expand as Roland Allen believes what happened in the Early Church, then members will become leaders and missionaries and continue to plant and plant more churches in which the members will become leaders and missionaries and the cycle will continue. Churches will continue to plant churches. This is how the three church planters in Brazil aim to plant 25 churches – through the churches they plant first and the members, who are potential leaders and church planters. Raising-up potential leaders is the key to fulfilling the vision.

The need for missionaries to pass the leadership of the church to the locals is well stated by Rufus Anderson:

As soon as the mission church has a native pastor, the responsibilities of self-government should be devolved upon it. Mistakes, perplexities, and sometimes scandals, there will be; but it is often thus that useful experience is gained, even in churches here at home. The salary of the native pastor should be based on the Christianized ideas of living acquired by his people; and the church should become self-supporting at the earliest possible day. It should also be self-propagating from the very first. Such churches, and only such, are the life, strength, and glory of missions.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 96. This quote is found in the introduction of chapter 7 where Roland Allen is discussing the Church as an organization as compared to “The new modern missionary organization” which he sees as an addition. The Church, he argues, ceased to expand; therefore creating a need in which the modern organization of missionary societies fulfilled. However, the crux of his argument is that the Early Church expanded and its members participated in that expansion. The simple organization of the Early Church had no need for a missionary society. This is relevant to what George, Kory and Jack are doing in Brazil and their approach to expanding the church through multiplication and leadership development.

⁶⁷ Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, 112.

The new leaders, pastors and church planters will make mistakes, but that is part of the developmental process. George, Kory and Jack will also make mistakes, which will be part of their experiential knowledge and development. Planting churches is really about people and their potential. As soon as a new church begins to form it should see its potential to propagate its faith to other areas within its town and beyond the borders of its town to other towns and cities. This is *the life, strength, and glory* of the church.

In one year and nine months Kory has seen two churches planted with outreach taking place in a third location in preparation to start a third church.⁶⁸ He has six local leaders under his care, four of whom serve as associate pastors. He is pastoring both churches with their assistance. Three of the four associate pastors were new Christians under his ministry. The fourth associate pastor was a nominal Christian with no commitment to any particular church. Another one of his leaders is overseeing the outreach to their third church plant target city. None of his six leaders have had any previous training or experience in ministry. He is discipling them with a vast array of courses that engage them in Biblical studies and ministry development. He also mentors them through the practical aspects of church planting and ministry involvement.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See Appendix 2. All three church planters consider a church a church when they have at least one home group (house church) in a new location. The new group of believers meet together regularly to praise and worship Christ, study the Word, experience a sense of commitment and belonging to one another, and strive together to achieve the purpose and vision of the local church. Part of the purpose and vision of these newly formed churches is to plant new churches. All three church planters were also required to learn a new language (Portuguese) and needed to make cultural adjustments with their wives and children in a new environment (Kory, George, and Jack. 2012. Interview by author. Pouso Alegre, Minas Gerias, Brazil. October 11-14; See also Appendices 2, 3, and 4).

⁶⁹ See Appendix 2. All three church planters have a similar approach for discipling their leaders. The courses include training and discipleship classes from Victory Family Centre that have been translated from English to Portuguese (See Appendices 2, 3, and 4). The translation for the courses was done mainly by Brazilians within the churches that formed the *Associação de Igrejas Evangélicas Transculturais – AIET* (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches) and the author.

George has seen three churches planted in one year and five months.⁷⁰ He has ten local leaders under his care. George is pastoring all three churches while discipling his ten leaders to pastor the planted churches as well as planting new churches. None of his leaders have had any previous training in ministry or leadership.⁷¹

Jack has seen two churches planted in one year and four months. He has two local leaders under his care. He is training one of them to pastor the first church plant and the other as an associate pastor. However, he is overseeing both churches. Neither of his leaders have had any previous training in ministry or leadership.⁷²

All three church planters are concerned about fulfilling their target of 25 churches in two years. Though the multiplication of their churches should accelerate as more churches are planted and involved in planting their own churches, the rate of development of their leaders determines the velocity of future churches being planted. They recognize that not all their leaders and potential leaders have developed in the way and at the rate they had hoped. George feels that they need more spiritual maturity. For him, this involves knowledge and understanding of the Word, character development, commitment and skills in the areas of: counseling, communication, and leadership.⁷³ Both George and Kory recognize that a few of their leaders are developing in the way they had hoped.⁷⁴ In other words, they are spiritually maturing and taking on leadership responsibilities in the churches with a vision to plant more churches. However, all three

⁷⁰ See Appendix 3. George and Jack arrived to Brazil after Kory.

⁷¹ See Appendix 3.

⁷² See Appendix 4.

⁷³ See Appendix 3.

⁷⁴ See Appendices 2 and 3.

church planters feel more time is needed for equipping and training of their leaders in order to see the fulfillment of 25 churches planted.⁷⁵

“If the foreign missionary trains us to lead he ought to entrust us with the position of leaders.”⁷⁶ Jack, Kory and George struggle with the time-frame of when the locals are to assume the leadership responsibilities of the church, not the fact that they need to lead the church. When asked if they have potential leaders that could fulfill their roles as church planting trainers, they believed that they did. In fact, they planned to move their residence to other towns, locations of future church plants, to continue to plant new churches and allow the first leaders to run the first churches and prepare their members to plant more churches. They plan to follow-up with these leaders and continue to develop them in the areas of leadership, Bible knowledge and various ministerial skills.⁷⁷ It seems like a contradiction of their leaders needing more time to develop and be trained and then moving away from them to plant new churches. Is it a contradiction or is it their strategy? It is part of their strategy to move to future church planting sites so that new churches can be planted with the help of the original churches already planted. The amount of churches being planted grows as the missionaries move to new locations to plant new churches that are part of the church planting vision they instilled within the original churches. As the missionary church planters model church planting and provide continued training, the original churches continue to expand both locally and abroad through the local leadership.

⁷⁵ See Appendices 2, 3, and 4.

⁷⁶ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 24.

⁷⁷ See Appendices 2, 3, and 4.

Is it wise for the missionaries to move on to other locations and leave their churches in the hands of young pastors and leaders in Christ? Rufus Anderson says, “A foreign missionary should not be the pastor of a native church. His business is to plant churches, in well-chosen parts of his field, committing them as soon as possible to the care of native pastors...”⁷⁸ Henry Venn, when speaking about the work of a missionary society, concurs with Rufus Anderson,

What, then, is the duty of the Christian church under the present dispensation? It is, not to spread their Missionaries over the whole heathen population, but to establish in each district, and especially where there are separate languages, a self-supporting, self-governing, self-extending native church. And what is the duty of the mother Church towards such native daughter Churches? Not to supply an European pastorate, but to prepare native pastors for native converts...⁷⁹

The voices of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson are interestingly contextual in both the mid-1800’s with the role missionary societies played in the plantation of churches and with George, Kory and Jack planting churches in Brazil in 2013. Local leaders need to lead the church in order for the church to fulfill the vision and extend itself locally, nationally and internationally.

Donald McGavran also believes that younger churches do not need the help of missionaries,

Missionaries should not go home but turn over authority and go on to yet unconverted populations. Contrary to much popular opinion, missionaries are sent not to help younger churches, but to multiply churches in new segments of the population.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, 112.

⁷⁹ Henry Venn, *To Apply The Gospel: Selections From The Writings Of Henry Venn*, ed. Max Warren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 118-119. This particular selection, pages 117-130, was taken from: *Missionary Publications Miscellaneous*, Vol. II, No. 9. The substance of an address at the Islington Clerical Meeting, January 10, 1865. Retrospect and prospect of the operation of the Church Missionary Society.

⁸⁰ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 291.

Though the local leaders and pastors may need much development, the local church cannot develop if they do not lead.

Roland Allen recognizes that the role of the missionary changes when the locals lead the church,

...the missionary and the bishop should leave that newly constituted church to find out for itself what being a church means in daily practice...I do not mean that he should neglect it... We must learn the distinction between leaving Christians to learn what they can only learn for themselves, and abandoning them...To leave new-born churches to learn by experience is apostolic, to abandon them is not apostolic: to watch over them is apostolic, to be always nursing them is not apostolic: to guide their education is apostolic, to provide it for them is not apostolic...The man then who would guide such a church as I have described and assist its education must obviously get out of the way to give it room; because if he stays, or if he leaves someone from outside in charge, it will plainly not have room to move.⁸¹

As Jack, Kory and George move to other Brazilian cities to continue to plant new churches, their roles become more apostolic in their relation to their first church planting endeavors. These original churches need room to grow, but not without the oversight and guidance of the three church planters and their *bishop*.⁸² Indigenous principles are applied, but a continuous network of growth and development continues. The churches they planted are not abandoned; they are embraced, yet free.

VI. SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS

Donald McGavran believes the spiritual dynamics of growth play an important role on the extension of the kingdom of God. Church Growth Movement leaders see two

⁸¹ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 150-151.

⁸² Victory Family Centre does not use the term "Bishop" in their leadership structure; it is only used here to link the quote from Roland Allen to George, Kory and Jack. Their "Bishop" is the Regional Missions Director for Latin America. Victory Family Centre has divided the world into various missions regions. The church planters/missionaries in a particular region are under the Regional Missions Director for that region. At the time of writing, the three missionaries are under the Regional Missions Director – Antonio Moraes.

areas that are prominent in church growth: supernatural signs and wonders, and prayer.⁸³

Melvin Hodges asserts that a successful church on the mission field employs New Testament methods which involve the dynamics of the power and ministries of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴ José Bonino sees that “the experience of the Holy Spirit is, in a Pentecostal, the experience of ‘the power of the Holy Spirit’...It is power to witness, to heal, to speak in tongues, to be ‘wholly sanctified.’”⁸⁵ Tony and Felicity Dale believe,

God is intentionally missional, and as we spend time in His presence asking to see life from His perspective, He will break our hearts with the plight of those who do not know Him. He then gives us authority over the works of the devil so that we see signs and wonders done in His name.⁸⁶

They link prayer with signs and wonders by first spending time in the presence of God.

If the church is to follow Jesus it must learn the foundational skill of an ability to hear from God.⁸⁷ Tony and Felicity Dale continue their emphasis on prayer for the “Simple Church Movement” by stating the following: “...if this movement is not nurtured on our knees, it could simply go off course or simply fizzle into nothing. We cannot expect a move of God to come cheaply; we must be a people who are willing to pray the price.”⁸⁸ Prayer is essential in any move of God. Donald McGavran recognizes its importance for revival, “In hundreds of instances, prayer brought revival...God responds to sincere continued prayer. Prayer is what God wants his people to offer. ‘Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you.’”⁸⁹ David Garrison, in his account of a Cambodian Church Planting Movement in the 1990’s,

⁸³ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 8.

⁸⁴ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 131.

⁸⁵ Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*, 125.

⁸⁶ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 48.

⁸⁷ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 47.

⁸⁸ Tony Dale, Felicity Dale, and Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant*, 58.

⁸⁹ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 134-135.

noted that prayer played an important role in the multiplication of Baptist churches. He says,

Prayers were aimed at protecting church planters and opening the hearts of lost Khmer people. God answered on both counts. Prayer was also integrated into the lives of the new believers...Signs and wonders, exorcisms, healing, and other manifestations of God's power were commonplace.⁹⁰

Prayer is key to church planting as well as any move of God in which believers desire to see and live in the manifestation of God's presence and walk in the power of His Spirit.

What is the role of "signs and wonders" in church planting? Donald McGavran believes that divine healing is one of the ways in which God brings men and women to believe in the Savior. For him, among vast populations, the stage must be arranged for divine healing to take place so that church growth may be administered.⁹¹ Melvin Hodges relates a personal infilling of the Holy Spirit in believers with an emphasis on miracles and healing the sick as a means of God awakening communities and convincing unbelievers of the power of God.⁹² He also recognizes the important role of faith in common people,

The faith which Pentecostal people have in the ability of the Holy Spirit to give spiritual gifts and supernatural abilities to the common people, even to those who might be termed "ignorant and unlearned," has raised up a host of lay preachers and leaders of unusual spiritual ability – not unlike the rugged fishermen who first followed the Lord.⁹³

⁹⁰ Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 71.

⁹¹ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 145.

⁹² Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 132. The infilling of the Holy Spirit, for Pentecostals, is a reference to Baptism in the Spirit – a subsequent experience to salvation in Christ when one yields to the Holy Spirit resulting in power to be a witness (a reference to Acts 1:8). The "power" refers to speaking and testifying the gospel of Jesus Christ in the authority of the Holy Spirit which often results in the manifestation of various gifts from the Holy Spirit. The gifts of healing and miracles (1 Corinthians 12:9, 10, 28) are two such gifts.

⁹³ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 132.

Can God use anyone in any culture to miraculously touch others with His power? If He can, people should be encouraged to pray for and move in the gifts of the Holy Spirit which bring glory to God in the growth and planting of many churches.

Kory, George and Jack responded to the importance of “signs and wonders” in church planting. Kory said it was essential and it will make a difference. He said that new converts who experienced deliverance from demonic oppressions, panic anxiety, depression, addictions and financial crisis are now the core leaders of his church plants. Kory also recognizes that prayer for miracles and healings is not uncommon in many Brazilian evangelical churches. He desires to incorporate this into his church planting as a confirmation of the preaching of the Word and to allow the Holy Spirit to operate through the gifts of the Spirit.⁹⁴

George believes that “signs and wonders” are important to authenticate the word of God and to make people more open to the gospel. He has seen the difference it has made in his church plants. One lady asked for a miraculous sign of healing for her son from a big lump in his stomach. After prayers, her son was miraculously healed. She became a fully committed leader in the church and has seen others come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior through her prayers and witness. George goes on to share testimonies about financial miracles, deliverance from depression that healed a marital relationship, and deliverance from drugs and other vices. Those that have experienced a “sign” or “miracle” have become faithful members of the church and at least half of them have become leaders.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See Appendix 2.

⁹⁵ See Appendix 3.

Peter Wagner says that one of the major factors of the extraordinary growth of the Pentecostal movement in Latin America was faith healing.⁹⁶ William Read expands that thought,

All these young (Pentecostal) Churches have interesting stories to tell. They are entirely self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. In other words, they are genuinely indigenous. All testify to the same fundamental fact – that their growth is due to the power of the Holy Spirit enabling them to witness and testify with power. This – they say – is the secret of church growth. These young Churches may have many fanatical, individualistic, and immature characteristics, but they are quickly learning their lessons on the battlefield of their missionary endeavors and are regrouping their battalions to attack the “enemy” in force.⁹⁷

Healings and miracles attribute to church growth as the spiritual powers of darkness are confronted by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, it is not just a battle, it is a blessing to those in need regardless of their decision to follow Christ and become part of the church.

Jack also has seen a number of “signs and wonders” take place in his church planting endeavors. He has seen the healing of various physical ailments through prayer as well as a number of jobless people finding jobs. However, Jack is a bit frustrated with one “miracle” in particular. A lady who was barren for seven years became pregnant through the prayers of Jack and his team. After she gave birth, she told Jack that she preferred Spiritism.⁹⁸ For Jack, her Spiritism gave her no child yet she stuck with it. Jack has learned that miracles do not “save” people, and may not even bring people to be part

⁹⁶ Wagner, *Church Growth & The Whole Gospel*, 23.

⁹⁷ Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil*, 165.

⁹⁸ Spiritism in Brazil is vast and manifests in various forms. One of the most popular forms of Spiritism can often be traced back to the teaching of the Frenchman Allan Kardec, who combined science, philosophy and religion. His material can be found in almost any magazine stand or bookstore in Brazil. Often, the Brazilian form of Spiritism combines various religious belief systems. Another popular form of Spiritism in Brazil is called “Umbanda.” Umbanda was developed by the Africans who came to Brazil as slaves. They combined their African deities with Roman Catholic saints. The Scripture is often used in Spiritist meetings and many Spiritist also attend both evangelical churches and the Catholic Church. A good synopsis of Spiritism can be found by William Read in his book, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil*, 209-211.

of the church. He feels that the miracles have not yielded the expected result. Though he still believes in “signs and wonders,” his negative experience has left him questioning its value in church planting.⁹⁹

Miracles and healings are the desire of anyone who needs them. Even those who feel they do not need them may need a “touch” from God in their lives. That miraculous “touch” may not always lead someone to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, as Jack realized. However, it is still a sign of the goodness of God, His compassion for those in need, and His love for everyone. Church planters may or may not experience various kinds of “signs and wonders,” but one important ingredient must pass through their spirit if they want to multiply churches for the glory of God – faith.

VII. FAITH

The three church planters were asked, “What do you feel God is doing through the nation of Brazil?” Jack said, “I would like to think it is a Church Planting Movement.”¹⁰⁰ George responded, “I think God is wanting to raise up churches with a vision of churches that plant churches through the missions program of Victory Family Centre.”¹⁰¹ Kory continues, “God is raising up local bodies of believers all over Brazil who are Biblically sound and committed Christians who are involved in the ministries of the church, moving in the gifts of the Spirit, and participating in the Great Commission

⁹⁹ See Appendix 4.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix 4.

¹⁰¹ See Appendix 3.

(evangelism, praying, giving, going to missions).”¹⁰² None of this can take place without faith.

Melvin Hodges says that a missionary must be careful not to fail to exercise a vigorous faith in God for the development of the spiritual capabilities of his converts.¹⁰³ Aubrey Malphurs believes, “God desires to minister through men and women of strong faith who are willing to trust him for big things.”¹⁰⁴ He also says, “What church planters can learn...is that nothing of any spiritual significance is accomplished outside of faith.”¹⁰⁵ Roland Allen sums up his book, *The Spontaneous Expansion Of The Church* (1927) with the following words about faith,

What is necessary is faith. What is needed is the kind of faith which, uniting a man to Christ, sets him on fire. Such a man can believe that others finding Christ will be set on fire also. Such a man can see that there is no need of money to fill a continent with the knowledge of Christ. Such a man can see that all that is required to consolidate and establish that expansion is the simple application of the simple organization of the Church. It is to men who know that faith, who see that vision, that I appeal.¹⁰⁶

Donald McGavran believes in goal setting and faith projections. He says that faith projections are estimates as to what growth God desires to grant a congregation or denomination.¹⁰⁷ He goes on to say,

Faith projections are made in prayer and with a confident assumption of the continued presence of the Holy Spirit. Faith projections are what we feel God wants to do through us. As responsible stewards of this grace we ask what we believe is in accordance with his will.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² See Appendix 2.

¹⁰³ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 20.

¹⁰⁴ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches For The 21st Century*, 71.

¹⁰⁵ Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches For The 21st Century*, 72.

¹⁰⁶ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 157.

¹⁰⁷ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 279.

¹⁰⁸ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 280.

Kory, George and Jack have all made faith projections of seeing 25 churches planted in Brazil. They are concerned whether or not each of them will actually see 25 churches planted in two years. However, their vision is activated and their faith has seen them through the planting of a combined total of seven churches with more on the way. Seven churches are planted that did not exist before they arrived in Brazil. These seven churches are in the process of multiplying. Faith sustains men and women of God who desire to fulfill His will.

VIII. CONCLUSION

God desires for people to reach out to all people – *pante ta ethne*. Relationships and evangelization are centric in meeting both the spiritual and physical needs of humanity through the building of His church. This involves not only establishing local bodies of believers, but bodies of believers that continue to multiply. The multiplication of churches begins with the multiplication of believers and leaders in the body of Christ. Discipleship, mentoring, teaching and training need to be active in order for potential leaders to be developed within the church. These leaders, open to the Spirit of God, can be used through the gifts of the Spirit to experience “signs and wonders,” not only in and through their lives, but in and through the lives of the people whom they want to reach for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Missionaries, local leaders and believers in general need to rise up in faith to believe what is impossible for humanity, yet possible by and through the Spirit of God. It is a faith that shakes the very ground that one walks upon.

William Read recognizes that church growth and church planting endeavors can change the receptivity of a country, of a place, of a people group, “Whole countries in

various parts of the world, from time to time become so responsive in comparison with their former indifference, that a new dimension of church growth and a new kind of church planting become possible.”¹⁰⁹ George, Kory and Jack are engaged in a “new kind of church planting.” Or are they, to the best of their ability, following a model passed down to them from their home church that for them, best represents the New Testament model? The important thing is that they are planting churches that plant churches. They are extending the kingdom of God in Brazil, and through Brazil, to the ends of the earth.

¹⁰⁹ Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil*, 14.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH

I. OVERVIEW

The aspiration to plant a church must be rooted in both the heart and word of God.

Jesus, in his prayer for the disciples, reveals His heart for the world,

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.¹

The marriage motif is once again seen in this passage of scripture as the uniting of Jesus with the disciples (the church) and they becoming “one.” This is a testimony to the world so that all may believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Jesus “sent” His disciples into the world. As they are “sent,” both people and peoples come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior resulting in the establishment of churches. Therefore, the need and motivation to plant churches comes from the heart of God and the prayers of Jesus to take His word to the whole world so that “the world may believe.”

How can a church plant another church? This chapter will consider a number of necessary ingredients to plant churches that will also plant future churches. The goal set forth is to be able to see churches that plant future churches in the time frame of six months to one year. The size of the church desiring to plant a new church should not matter. However, other vital aspects are important: vision, responsibility, discipleship formation and training, prayer, finances and preparation. These aspects will be considered

¹ John 17: 17-21 (New International Version).

in this chapter. Furthermore, they will be applied to Transcultural Family Church (TFC) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.² TFC was a small church with about 25-30 members. It planted a new church in the city of Raposos,³ a small city 23 kilometers outside of Belo Horizonte. The author, who was the missionary pastor of TFC, oversaw and implemented this project through the local pastor, Tiago,⁴ and the leadership of TFC. Each of the above ingredients will be examined and then applied to TFC and its goal of planting a church in Raposos.

II. VISION

Vision is a confirmation in the heart and spirit of a person of what God can do. It is divine revelation and prophetic insight into possibilities beyond human capabilities.⁵ For the purposes of church planting, it can be both revelatory and anticipatory. It is revelatory in the sense that the heart of God is revealed and confirmed in the hearts of the believers. This revelation comes from the heart of God and is confirmed in the word of

² Transcultural Family Church (TFC) in Portuguese, the official language of Brazil, is Igreja Família Transcultural.

³ Raposos was chosen by TFC for their first church-plant through a period of prayer and fasting in November of 2012. Various potential cities outside of Belo Horizonte were considered and visited for future church-plants as well.

⁴ Tiago had grown through various levels of leadership within TFC previous to 2012. In January of 2012 he officially became an Associate Pastor. The author continued to disciple him in preparation to be the lead pastor at which time the author would relinquish his role as mission pastor over the church. This project provided an opportunity to fulfill the vision of TFC through planting a church in Raposos. The author not only exposed Tiago to church planting, but gave him the lead responsibility in seeing it through. The choice of the city, Raposos, was one of a few possible cities after praying over a map of the cities surrounding Belo Horizonte. Tiago, with a team of members, visited all of the possible cities, during the first couple of weeks in the month of November in 2012, and explored them while praying and fasting for direction. Raposos was chosen to begin the first church plant during that same month. The author felt this in his heart weeks before but knew that he had to allow Tiago to explore all the possible cities as well as allow him to make the final decision as to where TFC would plant the church. The responsibility of achieving the goal of planting a new church or not would rest in the hands of Pastor Tiago. In a sense, this was one of the final challenges of fulfilling the vision of TFC and the role of the author, as a foreign missionary, in seeing the church he planted able to plant a new church and fulfill its vision and purpose.

⁵ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore in depth the meaning of vision in both the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, the emphasis in chapter five will focus on the necessity of vision, in the context of planting churches, within the local church.

God. Vision is also anticipatory in the sense of looking ahead with an expectation that something can and will be done. It is seeing possibilities in seemingly impossible situations. In the context of this thesis-project, reception of vision may be seen in how a pastor or leader in a church receives a vision to plant another church. As the pastor of a church is praying and fasting for the direction of God for his church, the Spirit of God confirms in the heart of the pastor to plant a new church through his existing church. Through prayer and study of the scriptures, it is confirmed to him that this impression or vision is truly of God. In a spirit of excitement and expectation, he shares this vision with his leaders. His leaders receive the vision and share it with the rest of the congregation with the same excitement and expectation. As the church recognizes that the vision is from God, as confirmed in the scriptures, they begin to prepare to plant a church.

Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.” A church without vision is like a ship without an engine. It can provide a lot of good amenities and fellowship, but it goes nowhere. It needs power and direction. Acts 1:8 reveals both the power, which comes from the Holy Spirit, and the direction, to be witnesses “to the ends of the earth.” A believer in a church without vision can still be “happy” as he or she follows the scriptures (“law”), but will still have difficulty fulfilling his or her purpose in the body of believers. Leadership in the body of Christ must have vision in order to accomplish all that God desires in and through them as well as in and through the church. Without vision, the members will go in the direction that they deem fit. This could lead to the maintenance of a dying church or factions within the church. A clear vision unifies the body of believers with a common purpose and direction.

Establishing a vision in the local church is priority. Without it a strategy cannot be developed, projections cannot be made and application will never take place. Vision gives an identity to the church and reveals its purpose. Someone may ask, “Who are we as a local church? What is our purpose?” The local church needs the ability to answer these inquiries by members, attendees and visitors alike. Receiving a vision for the local church enables the leadership and members to form a statement of their mission. This mission statement serves as a guideline for everything that is done in the church. It represents the fundamental spiritual principles upon which the church functions. The mission statement for Transcultural Family Church is as follows:

1. To bring glory to God
2. To reach out to the lost within Brazil
3. To holistically minister to the members within the church
4. To reach out to the lost throughout the world⁶

How does one reach out to Brazil, a very large country, and the world through TFC? The answer for TFC is through church planting. Planting churches in Brazil and around the world: 1) brings glory to God, 2) reaches out to the lost in Brazil, and 3) reaches out to the lost in the world. However, it is also part of the holistic development of the members within the church. Every member needs to grow and mature in Christ, and as they do they discover their part in the body of Christ and God’s heart for the world. Through a systematic program of discipleship, members are prepared to participate in church

⁶ This mission statement resembles the mission statement of Victory Family Centre in Singapore. The mission pastor of TFC was sent to Brazil by Victory Family Centre (VFC) to plant churches. The VFC mission statement is as follows: 1) To bring glory to God, 2) To reach out to pre-believers in Singapore, 3) To minister holistically to the members in the church, and 4) To reach out to pre-believers in the world. The mission statement for TFC resembles that of VFC because its purpose and vision are the same. TFC is part of the global network of VFC.

planting through prayer, giving, and actually “going” with a group of others from the church to plant a new church.

Vision is the first priority in church planting, because without it, nothing will happen. It is important to receive and establish a clear vision for the local church so that it may grow, prosper and fulfill its mission. A clear vision allows the local church to establish the following:

1. The mission statement of the church.
2. Community and unity of the body in the vision and mission of the local church.
3. Purpose for the existence of the local church.
4. Excitement about what God can and will do through the local church.

The specific vision of Transcultural Family Church as it relates to this project is as follows:

To plant a new church in the city of Raposos that will be like TFC in its vision and purpose of planting new churches. The goal is to plant this new church in six months. TFC will continue in close relationship with the new church through discipleship and training of leadership for two years. However, the local leadership in Raposos must be developed to lead the church. TFC will continue to assist in the development and maturity of the pastor and leadership in the church in Raposos as necessary and until the church in Raposos plants its first church. A continued atmosphere of mutual edification and encouragement will continue as both TFC and the church in Raposos network together to reach both Brazil and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁷

Direction and focus emit a sense of security with the members of the church in fulfilling a common purpose. The members of TFC embraced the vision to plant a new church in Raposos. Receiving and casting the vision is the first step towards fulfillment of the vision. Once the vision is established and the specific direction is clear, the church

⁷ This vision focus and statement was created by the author in discussion and prayer with the associate pastor, Tiago, of TFC to ensure commitment in seeing the new church develop and grow. In November of 2012, both the author and Tiago agreed together in prayer and shared the vision with the other leaders in TFC. Subsequently it was shared, by Tiago, with the whole church. All the members and leaders were excited and supportive of the new church plant.

must consider its level of commitment and responsibility in ensuring that the vision takes place.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility, in general, is lacking in this day and age. It is not a localized issue; it is a global concern that reaches into various peoples, nations and cultures. Its lack may be seen in myriad of dysfunctional families, the breakdown of marriages, growing financial debts, and the general lack of commitment and faithfulness to anything. Many have learned and are learning to only be concerned with themselves, but even that focus is becoming apathetic. It is seen in the diminished expectations for oneself while the expectations for others continue to grow. It has affected the church and its need to respond to the direction of God both for the church and its individual members. The pastor and members of the church need to embrace the vision and mission given to them by God and see it through to completion. A responsible person and church neither “give up” nor project their God-given responsibility on someone or something else. They remain faithful and committed until the very end. Where is this sense of responsibility today? If it cannot be absorbed in the essence of the church and its vision, the church will celebrate the word of God spoken and this missing element will result in the church doing nothing about it. Failing in its mission, the church continues to edify itself in great exposition of the word. This is not every church. But like a virus, it has made its way into too many hearts and congregations around the globe. How do individuals discern when this virus has entered their church? Phrases, comments and expressions reveal the heart. Any comment or response that excuses people from doing their part and fulfilling their role, as part of the body of Christ, removes them from both the will and vision of God for

their local church. If this sense grows and spreads like a virus, the church begins to stagnate. A stagnated church, like a stagnated believer, embraces its own will with a pseudo spiritual cloak.

Responsibility breaks the back of stagnation in the local church. The cloak can be removed. The virus can be destroyed. As the local church embraces its sense of responsibility, both corporately and individually, to fulfill unto completion the vision given to them by God, the church prepares to soar. Unity in the vision accelerates the sense of responsibility in the church. It is then able to focus and move forward.

The relationship between a mother and her daughter illustrates the need for responsibility.⁸ As a mother “bears fruit” and gives birth to a daughter, their relationship is encompassed with responsibility. The mother is engrossed with the care of her child. She feeds, embraces, nurtures and loves her child through the whole process of maturity. A good mother does not abandon her child upon birth, but sees her child grow and develop into adulthood. The hope in the heart of the mother is to also see her child, one day, give birth and go through the same process of nurture and development. In this ideal scenario of love and care, the love relationship between mother and daughter continues to grow from generation to generation as both the family and the loving embrace of the mother also grows. So it is with the church.

The importance of responsibility in a mother-daughter relationship is also seen in the relationship between a church and the new church it plants. The initial church may be seen as the mother church and the new church as the daughter church. This is the model

⁸ Both parents and all the children are part of an ideal loving relationship in the family unit. Mother and daughter are chosen as to illustrate the relationship between a mother church and a daughter church.

Transcultural Family Church used as it planted a new church in Raposos. TFC gave birth to its daughter church in Raposos. Responsibility is an important part of the gestation, birthing and development of its daughter church. The same nurture and love a mother gives to her daughter must be applied from the members of TFC to their new church in Raposos. Responsibility involves an ongoing relationship that matures over time. As new members are disciplined in the new church, so the mother church must disciple the daughter church as a whole. They have a relationship in the body of Christ that should never be broken; however, it also needs to mature. The dynamic of how they relate one to another will develop and change over time just as the relationship of a parent to a child grows and develops over time. The relationship should develop into a maturity of equality as both the mother and the daughter, together, are the “bride” of Christ. As the scripture says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”⁹

A sign of maturity in the daughter church is when it gives birth to another church and itself becomes a mother church. For a church that plants churches, the daughter church giving birth to its own daughter church is like a “rite of passage” that the original mother church recognizes in the maturity of its daughter church. It might say, “Our daughter has grown up and become a mother of her own.” This serves as an affirmation of the vision of God given to the first mother and being passed on from generation to generation. Each generation gives birth to a new generation.

Responsibility also evokes commitment. This commitment is seen in relationship to God, to one another (the body of Christ) and to the vision given and confirmed by

⁹ Proverbs 22:6.

God. It is putting God first in everything. It is recognizing the value and importance of the body of Christ in the local, global and projected churches. It is embracing people in the community surrounding the church with the love of God.

The responsibility of Transcultural Family Church was to become a mother church that never severs ties with its daughter church in Raposos. The leadership and members of TFC in unity needed to participate in the birthing and nurturing of the new church. They must continue striving to see their daughter grow and mature with the hope and expectation of mutual edification and fellowship as she grows and develops. Therefore, a long-term, life-long, commitment is made to the daughter to whom they will give birth through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. It will not be a relationship of control, but of loving release into maturity. A good parent does not give everything to the child so as to enable that child to learn and grow. Likewise, the mother church, TFC, will not provide everything the new church may want or need so that the new church may also grow in responsibility and commitment.

The leaders and members of TFC were taught and encouraged to accept their responsibility and commitment to the new church to be planted in the city of Raposos.¹⁰ The church already had a vision to be a missions-oriented church which will plant churches both locally and abroad. Planting its first church 23 kilometers from Belo Horizonte gave TFC an opportunity to see first-hand the development of the new church which elevated and should continue to elevate its sense of responsibility for the new work. This will have later positive effects as it plants churches in locations much farther

¹⁰ This happened throughout the month of November in 2012 during weekly cell group meetings, prayer meetings and the Sunday services.

away. Receiving vision and accepting responsibility are priorities in a new church plant effort. Following these two vital aspects is developing a structure and a program that will facilitate growth and discipleship.

IV. DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

This section of chapter five will consider the formation of a cell group structure that will enable the church to grow and provide a sustainable structure both in the mother church and the daughter church. It will also consider the development of a program with a goal of maintaining and accelerating discipleship at all levels of maturity in the church. Focus, however, will be given to the initial stages of development that would be seen in a new church plant. Lastly, leadership training will be considered from the point of view of preparing the mother church to plant a new church and the initial development of leadership training in the new church.

A. CELL GROUP FORMATION

Transcultural Family Church had its first gathering as a cell group in the mission pastor's apartment. The TFC cell group is a reunion of believers in a location outside of the church. Most often it is in a member's home.¹¹ The principle of meeting in homes is taken from scripture, "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."¹² A typical cell group meeting will include: worship, prayer, study of the word of God and sharing. However, it is much more. It is emphasized in TFC as the first priority of all the weekly church reunions, including a weekly prayer meeting and Sunday service. Why? It is where relationships

¹¹ Cell groups may also meet in other locations: parks, coffee shops and even under a tree. However, they are usually most conducive in the home of a member or host.

¹² Acts 5:42.

are developed and formed. It is considered the first door into the church where members can invite their non-Christian friends and relatives in an environment which is non-threatening. It is the base for one-to-one discipleship in the church. Members of a particular cell group disciple new converts and invite them to be part of the cell group so that they can foster relationships in the church within an environment where access to other people is readily available. The leaders in the cell group disciple the members and the members are encouraged to disciple new Christians. TFC cell groups are formed geographically so that members and visitors may visit and participate in a group closest to their homes. Exceptions are made for youth and other special concerns.¹³ In the cell group, recognition of abilities, talents and giftings are encouraged and given opportunity of expression, under guidance, within the group.¹⁴ Potential leaders are developed and given opportunity to assist in the leading of the cell group. TFC imparts the vision of “giving birth” to each cell group. Future cell groups are formed through existing cell groups by means of evangelism, prayer and reaching out to the community. The Sunday service is a celebration service of all the cell groups uniting together in a common cause and purpose. This cell group structure facilitates the laity to minister and fellowship with a vision to multiply locally. The mission statement of the church is realized and felt within the cell group. This structure prepares the members of each cell group to reproduce themselves through discipleship and church planting. As the cell groups already have a vision to multiply, multiplying the church in another city becomes a

¹³ This may include family, colleagues from work or close friends who live in a different geographical area but are willing to attend a group with the person who invited them.

¹⁴ “Abilities” is a general reference to things that people can do through their own experience and learning. “Talents” are special abilities within a given field of interest. Someone may be a talented artist or musician. It most often stems from a natural ability that has been developed. “Giftings” refer the list of God given gifts in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 28-31; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-12). These should be discerned and encouraged within the body of believers.

natural expression in fulfilling the vision of the church. The desired ministry within a cell group is the same as the desired ministry within a new church plant. What is the difference? The cell groups are connected in relationship and geographically to the same local body of believers, whereas the new church plant begins as a cell group in a geographic location far from the mother church. Cell group formation and structure facilitate church planting in TFC.

The cell group formation and structure of TFC served as the structure to facilitate the new church plant in Raposos. Evangelism and visitation took place until the “person of peace”¹⁵ opened his home and a cell group was developed.¹⁶ It was this first cell group that became the church in Raposos.¹⁷ The continued growth of the church will be felt through the multiplication of more cell groups, discipleship and outreach. Potential leaders will continue to be spotted and developed to oversee the church that began in a home. The success of discipleship within the cell group is determined by the level of maturity and the degree of commitment of those being discipled.

B. CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In order for a church to be able to plant another church, a program needs to be developed that facilitates Christian growth and maturity. Transcultural Family Church sees every member as a potential leader and church planter. They may or may not lead a

¹⁵ Luke 10:6 says, “man of peace.” The term “person of peace” better reflects the neutrality of gender in the purposes of church planting.

¹⁶ The cell group was formed on February 16, 2013 in the home of one of the new contacts in Raposos.

¹⁷ Pastor Tiago, who became the lead pastor of TFC in January of 2013, and the author (founding mission pastor of TFC) prayed over the leader-in-training and members of this first cell group during a combined Sunday service in Belo Horizonte on May 5, 2013. It was in this service that TFC officially recognized the cell group as its daughter church in Raposos. The new church in Raposos inaugurated their services as a church the following week on May 12, 2013 with Pastor Tiago, and assistance from his leaders, overseeing both TFC in Belo Horizonte and Raposos.

church planting team or become a mission pastor, but they can be involved in church planting by joining a team set out to plant a church in either a national or international location. How can the church disciple its members in such a way as to prepare them for missions and leadership? This challenge led to the development of a program that facilitates that kind of growth.

Faith, hope and love are foundational principles in the Bible on which a Christian development program may be built and help mature each person in the church. Gene Getz says,

By what criteria can we measure ourselves as a body to see if we have arrived at a degree of completeness? Again the New Testament is explicit. "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). Maturity in the body of Christ can be identified by the enduring virtues. The degree of completeness can be measured by the degree to which the church manifests faith, hope, and love.¹⁸

Paul often recognized these three virtues in the opening of his letters to the churches.¹⁹

They are foundational indicators of a maturing Christian life and church. Gene Getz goes on to indicate the basic meaning of these three indicators,

Love has to do with Christlike relationships among members of the body and toward all men – an attitude that creates unity and one mindedness. Faith has to do with the confidence that the body of Christ has in its Head – the Lord Jesus Christ. There is that unified conviction and assurance that God is, and that He answers prayer and that He is their divine source of life and existence. The presence of hope is manifested in stability, steadfastness and certainty, and particularly looks beyond the present to that day when Jesus Christ shall come again for the church, and in turn, to set up His eternal kingdom.²⁰

¹⁸ Gene A. Getz, *Sharpening the focus of the Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 53.

¹⁹ 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:3-5; Ephesians 1:15-18. Their relationship may also be seen in 1 Timothy 1:5 and 1 Peter 1:20-22.

²⁰ Getz, *Sharpening the focus of the Church*, 60.

Faith relates to the word of God. It has to do with belief and the understanding of Biblical truth. It grows in one's understanding of the word. Knowing God, through the word of God, develops faith in both God and His word.

Hope looks to eternity. It recognizes the promises of God in scripture and asks what it must do for the kingdom. It looks to the future, but focuses on the present. What must the church and the believers do now as they set their hope in God and His word? It compels the church and the believer to involvement in the ministry.

Love embodies itself in relationship with others. It is revealed in the body of believers in their relation one to another. It is demonstrated outside of the church to all peoples. It is the mark of a Christian as seen through the praxis of integrity, character and behavior. It is an indicator of spiritual maturity through personal development.

The measure of the vertical relationship with Jesus Christ is seen through these three virtues for each individual Christian and the church as a whole. These virtues are the basis of spiritual maturity and manifest themselves in growth. The horizontal relationship is seen in the dynamism of the relationships between the believers and their relationships with all peoples of the earth. Faith, hope and love serve as both the seed and the fruit of spiritual maturity.

The Christian Development Program (CDP) is a program that measures growth and maturity based upon the three virtues and focuses on development in three vital areas: Bible knowledge (faith), ministry involvement (hope) and personal growth (love).²¹ Bible knowledge begins with one-to-one discipleship over a series of

²¹ Programa de Desenvolvimento Cristão (PDC) in Portuguese. The term "Christian Development Program" is a generic term used by various churches and ministries; however, the Christian Development Program used by Transcultural Family Church is a program created by Rick Seaward, the founder of Victory Family Centre in Singapore. Rick Seaward developed this program to measure the level of maturity of a Christian

foundational courses concerning the new life of a Christian and basic doctrines of the faith. Numerous classes of twelve sessions each move the members along in their development of the word of God and its application. This initial discipleship is encouraged within the context of the cell group structure. Additional classes are also offered during the week for general attendance. These classes as well as the foundational discipling sessions are part of the Life in the Word (LIW)²² series of classes which combine Biblical study with the vision of the church. All members are encouraged to participate in the LIW classes so that they may have a strong foundation in the word. Members take classes and move from level to level in correspondence with their ministry involvement and personal development.

Ministry involvement involves participation in the various ministries of the church. It is the application of Bible knowledge. Everyone is part of the body of Christ and has a ministry within the body. A new Christian begins with being a witness of Jesus Christ. She shares with family and friends how Jesus changed her life. Being a silent witness through ones actions is important, but verbally sharing ones understanding of the gospel is encouraged. Ministry involvement may also begin in the ministry of helps, which is basically being available to do anything which is needed in assisting the various

from the time of salvation onwards. The author was involved in the further development of this program in the mid-1990's. It is not an exact science; it is a guide to help in the discipleship and development of Christians into full spiritual maturity, leadership and missions. The author, who is the mission pastor for Transcultural Family Church, has adapted the essence of this program of development for the church in Belo Horizonte. The basic program and principles are the same, but have been adapted for the culture and context of Belo Horizonte.

²² Vida na Palavra (VNP) in Portuguese. Most of the teachings and principles in the LIW would be applicable in most Pentecostal churches; however, a strong missions vision with a focus on church planting, is either directly or indirectly cast throughout the LIW curriculum. Therefore, they cannot be simply applied to any church context without a thorough investigation of the contents. Other churches, without a similar missions-oriented vision, have asked the author to use the LIW curriculum in their churches. This was discouraged based upon the fact that these churches needed to develop their own set of classes that implemented the vision of their own church. Implementing the vision of another church seldom works at all.

ministries of the church and cell groups. As members mature, their ministry involvement also matures and develops in the areas of their giftings, abilities, talents and availability.

Personal development is related to Christian ethics and integrity. A person's character is seen by the decisions he or she make daily. Those decisions should reflect the character of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit. A person could know the Bible and be involved in various ministries and still be an immature Christian if there is no personal development in his or her life. Bible knowledge and ministry involvement can be measured through ones participation in discipleship, various classes and ministries. However, personal development is a bit more challenging to measure. The attitudes and perspectives of a person reflect the reality of his or her personal growth in the Lord. Only God knows the heart of each person,²³ but the testimony of character and integrity is a reflection of his or her spiritual journey and maturity. Will a man hate or forgive someone who has wronged him? Will a woman apologize and ask for forgiveness when she recognizes what she did was wrong? Will a young man resist or go into a place that edifies the flesh and is a contradiction to the word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit within him? Myriad of daily encounters and decisions are determining factors in the level of maturity concerning personal growth. It is not the churches role to intrude into the lives of its members, but it is its role to encourage them in their walk as Paul did in Romans 12:1-2,

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship, and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

²³ Psalm 44:21; 139:1-2; 17:3; Jeremiah 12:3.

Bible knowledge, ministry involvement and personal development are three areas that must grow for a Christian to be spiritually mature. The true maturity of a Christian is seen in the weakest of these three areas. Someone may know the Bible well, but does not practice it. Another person may be involved in many ministries but never reads or studies the Bible. There may be a leader in a church who knows the Bible well and is involved in multiple ministries but has unforgiveness in his heart or is secretly caught up in the sins of the flesh. The weakest area is a reflection of the spiritual maturity of a person, not the strongest area. The challenge is for all three of these areas to grow together. At times, special attention needs to be given to the weakest area so it can catch up to the stronger (more mature) areas. For some it will involve more intense study of the word, possibly even going to Bible school. For others, it may involve discovering a ministry in which to participate and being a blessing to others. And yet, for others, it simply means to walk through life in its everyday circumstances, daily decisions, actions and words, glorifying God.

The Christian Development Program had to be functioning in Transcultural Family Church before it planted a church in Raposos. It did not need to function in its ideal form considering that TFC was also a young church that required continued growth. However, the leadership and members needed to be involved in the growth and development of the three vital areas: Bible knowledge, ministry involvement and personal development. This same program was initiated in the new church plant through the first cell group. It is significant to note that the maturity of a church is not based upon the level of maturity of its individual members. The pastor and certain members may be very mature, but the church is a reflection of the whole body. TFC, as a whole, was not at

the same level of maturity as its pastor and key leaders, but that is not a bad thing because it is a reflection of the maturity of the church as a whole.²⁴ However, TFC, as a church, had to be more mature than the church to be planted in Raposos. Quite simply, a Christian who discipled a new Christian must be more spiritually mature than the person whom he or she is discipling. The more mature Christian must continue to grow as he or she is also encouraging the new Christian to continue to grow. The mother church has a similar function. It must continue to grow spiritually and be more mature than the church it is planting. Eventually the new church plant will also grow to the same level of maturity as the mother church. Then they will function equally as sisters with their own sovereignty. When will that take place? That is relative to each church. The church must be self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. However, the church in Raposos will become sovereign when it is fulfilling the mission to plant another church. This is the principle of reproduction within discipleship. The goal for TFC was to plant a church in Raposos that would eventually plant another church in a different location.

The new church plant in Raposos must have an emphasis on knowing the word of God. Secondly, it must give opportunity for ministry involvement from the outset. This

²⁴ This is important for pastors and leadership to understand. There are times when a desired practice or concept must take time to develop in a church and not be rushed into just because the pastor wants it. The author experienced this multiple times in church planting. For example, while in São Paulo, the author realized that the fundamental doctrines of the church must be "owned" by the members of the church. In order for the members to believe with all their heart, identify with conviction and personally own the fundamental doctrines of the church, the pastor led the church on a spiritual journey of prayer and fasting over the Biblical purpose of the church. The week of prayer, fasting and study of the scripture culminated with an all-night prayer meeting discussing and praying over each fundamental doctrine to which the church must adhere according to scriptures. At 4:30 in the morning all the members present and the leadership came to one accord as to the purpose of the São Paulo church and its defining doctrines, which were supported by scripture. The process of the church owning its belief system was fundamental in its propagation of the gospel through church planting. They were sharing, with conviction, what they believed, not just what was passed down to them from the mission pastor or any other person. They believed it because they studied the word of God and found it to be true. To this day, the church in São Paulo still adheres to those same fundamental doctrines and belief system for the church.

may begin as a family opens their home to start a cell group.²⁵ It is also functioning when new members witness the love of Christ to others by their loving behavior. Helping with the function and set up of the cell group is also an expression of ministry. Thirdly, the new church plant must encourage the personal development and growth of each member. It will begin simple and develop as the new members mature.

C. LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Spotting potential leaders in the new church plant is of utmost importance. In fact, this is probably one of the most important focuses for the church planter. The development of leadership and pastors is essential to the church becoming sovereign. Imported pastors and leadership, even from the same nation, is certainly not the ideal. Emphasis on leadership development is an imperative part of the foundational soil germinating its future both locally and abroad. The local church needs leadership from its locale. The mother church, understanding and modelling this principle, needs to facilitate and give opportunity for potential leaders to grow in the new church plant.

Expectations of great spiritual maturity must be kept in check. One cannot expect the new church plant leaders to be as spiritually mature as the mother church leadership. Zeal, willingness, availability and time are factors in leadership development. However, when zeal, willingness and availability are present, time can be expedited. Young Christians may experience expedited growth as their relationship with God accelerates. These same Christians are capable of discipling newer Christians while at the same time being disciplined. In order for these young Christians to take on leadership in the new

²⁵ For TFC, it began with the formation of the first cell group in Raposos on February 16, 2013. The “person of peace” and his family began their ministry involvement by opening their home to neighbors and others in the community as well as Pastor Tiago and his wife.

church plant, transfer growth from other established churches in the city must be discouraged. Christians from other churches will import their ideas and models of ministry upon the new leadership which could lead to confusion and factions. These Christians should be encouraged to remain faithful to the churches in which they were a part. However, there will always be displaced Christians looking for a church to attend. In this case, they will either have to submit under the new and developing leadership of the new church plant or go elsewhere. The leadership in the mother church needs to train the new leaders on how to handle such situations and may need to intervene if certain cases become problematic.

Transcultural Family Church planned to include classes on leadership development coupled with an emphasis on the Christian Development Program for potential leaders in Raposos.²⁶ TFC wanted to prepare potential leaders to assist the mission pastor and other personnel from the mother church in evangelism, visitation, counselling and the running of cell groups in Raposos. The goal was for them to eventually run the cell group(s). Further opportunities were presented to them as the cell group began to have an official weekly service which included reaching out to contacts outside of the cell group including those involved in a potential cell group to be formed.²⁷ As a group of leadership in the new church plant grows, a potential pastor will be sought out. He or she will be raised as the local pastor of the church plant under the supervision

²⁶ However, this did not begin until after the inauguration of the house church on May 12, 2013.

²⁷ At the time another cell group was in the process of being formed in a second location. Members in the first cell group were encouraged to greater participation in preparing for the house church services and reaching out to the contacts in the second potential cell group.

of the mission pastor and mother church.²⁸ This supervision will continue until the new pastor is able to move the church to its sovereignty.

When a potential pastor is found, the leadership of the new church will be transferred to the new pastor through a process of mentoring. First, the mission pastor will do everything with the new pastor watching and learning. Second, the mission pastor will share numerous responsibilities with the new pastor like serving communion together, leading the service together, performing administrative tasks together, as well as various other responsibilities. Third, the new pastor will perform the duties of ministry with the mission pastor watching and observing so that he can counsel, encourage and sometimes correct the new pastor. Finally, the mission pastor will leave the new pastor to pastor the church. The mission pastor and mother church will be available for counsel and guidance as needed. At this point, the mission pastor serves in an advisory capacity, but not in an authoritative capacity over the new church. The time frame of passing the church fully to the local leadership varies depending on the level of experience, learning, aptitude and spiritual maturity of the new pastor. Whether a new local pastor takes years or months to develop, it should not affect the establishment of the new church. The mother church spiritually covers its daughter church until it matures to the point of sovereignty.

Transcultural Family Church had a vision to plant a church in Raposos in six months. Evangelism and visitation led to the forming of the first cell group as the “person

²⁸ Pastor Tiago functioned in the role of the “mission pastor” as there was no other prepared to fulfill that role from TFC. This was one of the options of leading the new church plant which will be presented later in this chapter. The classes and the development of potential leaders only officially began after May 12, 2013. Pastor Tiago, functioning as pastor over both churches in Belo Horizonte and Raposos was responsible for both the continued development of the leaders in Belo Horizonte and the potential leaders in Raposos.

of peace” was prayed for and found.²⁹ The first contacts began the discipling process through basic foundations in the Christian Development Program.³⁰ They were encouraged through study of the word, ministry involvement and challenged in their personal development. Potential leaders were sought out so that they might be developed through leadership training and ministry opportunities.³¹ More potential leaders and a potential pastor were matters of prayer so that they could be discovered and further developed. However, local leadership running the church without the help or supervision of TFC took longer than hoped for since there was no prospective pastor to replace Pastor Tiago in Raposos when the church was inaugurated. These are matters of faith and responsibility. It is faith in God to provide for all that is needed in the establishment of this new church. It is the responsibility of TFC doing whatever is needed to ensure that the new church will be established and develop leadership from within the boundaries of the church in Raposos.

V. PRAYER

The essentiality of prayer goes without saying. It is an indispensable element in church planting. Prayer girds the new church for action and stability in its locale. The Lord says, “Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer...For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.”³² Jesus quotes Isaiah 56:7 when He cleansed the temple, “My house shall be called a house

²⁹ He was the owner of the house in which the first cell group met.

³⁰ The discipling process began after the first cell group gathering on February 16, 2013 and continued weekly.

³¹ The first potential leaders were a married couple that hosted the cell group gathering.

³² Isaiah 56:7.

of prayer.”³³ Prayer in the house of God, or the church, is both an Old Testament declaration and a New Testament affirmation. The church must be founded on prayer, exist with prayer and continue in prayer. It is an imperative element in establishing churches that plant churches.

Jesus teaches another dimension to prayer in His experience with the fig tree,

Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry. And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, “No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered. And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it shall happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”³⁴

Prayer and faith are two partners in seeing the will of God accomplished. Faith, “The assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen,”³⁵ is the compelling force behind prayer, that establishes the church as a “house of prayer for all peoples.” Being assured that a new church will be planted, and seeing it through spiritual eyes before it actually takes place, are works of faith in the Spirit of God grounded in continuous and committed prayer. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him (God).”³⁶ It is impossible to plant a new church without faith grounded in prayer.

An integral part of preparing for the new church plant is prayer. Transcultural Family Church both corporately and individually prayed continuously for the church to be planted in Raposos. However, the intensity of prayer is measured by the intensity of

³³ Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17.

³⁴ Matthew 21:18-22.

³⁵ Hebrews 11:1.

³⁶ Hebrews 11:6.

those praying. Therefore, TFC formed a group of intercessors to pray specifically for the new church plant in Raposos.³⁷ A minimum of two to three people were sought out to form this group. They prayed for all the preparation that needed to take place in the mother church which enabled it to plant the new church. They prayed for the involvement of key people and the logistical preparation of TFC. They prayed for the “person of peace,” contacts, salvations, the first cell group and the planting of the church in Raposos. They also prayed for signs and miracles to happen in Raposos that will evidence God’s love for the people. All aspects of preparation and the actual planting of the church were to be covered and saturated with prayer.

The intercessory prayer group was the first group formed in preparation for the church plant in Raposos.³⁸ They were to pray throughout the six months of preparation and continue to pray throughout the first six months of the new church being established. Their objective was to see the church planted and a group of intercessors formed within the new church.³⁹ Then they would be released to pray for another church plant. This group was to pray individually every day for the new work and meet once a week as a group. It was a closed intercessory prayer group of mature Christians. The corporate body had open prayer for the new church plant; however, the intercessory group for Raposos was not open to other people and visitors. This is very important in recognizing the depth of prayer desired. Mature intercessors recognize that hearing from God and praying through a situation requires a unity in the Spirit and a focus on the objective that will

³⁷ A group of three leaders from TFC in Belo Horizonte formed the intercessory prayer group for the church plant in Raposos.

³⁸ The group was formed in November of 2012.

³⁹ This new group of intercessors in the new church would function more like a prayer group than an intercessory prayer group at the beginning. The new prayer group was not expected to have the depth of spiritual maturity that the intercessory prayer group should have had from TFC. However, the spiritual depth would develop over time.

release them in the faith required to move mountains. “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”⁴⁰ The mission pastor and his associate of TFC kept in communication with the intercessory prayer group to share specific prayer pointers and listen to the group regarding what they felt God is saying. Open communication and respect between the intercessors and the leadership of TFC was imperative in continuing to hear from God and fulfilling the objective of planting a church in Raposos.

VI. FINANCES

The financial responsibilities involved in planting a church are often a deterrent to churches, both large and small, from actively pursuing their own church plant. Financial obligations should not prevent a body of believers from fulfilling the vision which God has entrusted to them. However, many models of church planting involve high costs. A new church plant in the state of Florida published its Strategic Start Up Plan online.⁴¹ The plan detailed the first year for planting the church. The first nine months were basically preparation for the launch of the church. The launch of services in the church and the following four months would conclude the first year of the Strategic Start Up Plan. It is quite an impressive plan detailing various target dates, outreach, marketing and the budget. The budget included all of the projected expenses for the first year (nine months of preparation and the first four months after the inauguration of the services). The budget was over \$92,000 for the first year which only included four months of services. It was shocking to see that a payroll budget of over \$18,000 was also included

⁴⁰ Matthew 21:22.

⁴¹ *Strategic Start Up Plan For: Oasis Church* (Bradenton, FL: Oasis Church, 2011), accessed February 19, 2014, <http://storage.cloversites.com/oasischurch1/documents/Official%20Strategic%20Start%20Up%20Plan.pdf>.

for the last four months after the services started.⁴² The financial extravagance involved in American church planting overwhelms the need to be involved.⁴³ It is no wonder why many churches, especially small churches, would rather help support a church plant from another church or group of churches instead of giving birth to their own church plant. Who can afford those expenses, even in America? For the majority of churches in Brazil, it is out of the question to even consider such expenses for church planting. Very few churches would be planted with such an extravagant budget. To be fair to the church in Florida, they really did their homework and were trying to keep the budget to a minimum. However, their minimum is not easily reproducible. If a church plant is not reproducible, giving birth will be kept to a minimum, if at all.

Churches planted within the metropolitan vicinity of the mother church may be kept in check financially as they often start with an umbilical cord connected to the mother church. The umbilical cord provides a source for both financial and other needs of the new church plant. This umbilical cord has been used both locally and internationally in the history of missions and church planting. Yet, as long as there is an umbilical cord, the church cannot be indigenous. Roland Allen says,

By importing and using and supplying to the natives buildings and ornaments which they cannot procure themselves, we tend to pauperize the converts. They cannot supply what they think to be needful, and so they learn to accept the position of passive recipients.⁴⁴

The umbilical cord creates a dependency upon the mother church to supply its needs.

Multiplication of a model based on dependency decelerates the creative growth of local

⁴² See *Strategic Start Up Plan For: Oasis Church*, 14.

⁴³ The author believes that Oasis Church is probably doing a wonderful work for the glory of Christ. He is just discouraged by the fact that this church and others with high financial budgets cannot be easily reproduced in America or abroad.

⁴⁴ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 56.

and national leaders excelling in faith, relying on God and fulfilling their mission. It could also lead to an eventual apathetic weariness as the resources are reduced or even run dry. If they eventually plant another church, they most often duplicate the same model. It is not a model that can be reproduced without large resources.

The budget of a new church plant often reflects the vision of the church. A large budget often focuses on the services, programs, equipment, supplies, building and the support of workers. Quick growth is often an expectation. The budget from the church in Florida was created with an expectation that 100 people would be part of the church by the fifth week of starting its services.⁴⁵ It may have achieved that goal, but at what cost? This is not a question of money; it is a question of vision.⁴⁶ After the author passed leadership of the church in Belo Horizonte to the local leadership and the pastor whom he disciplined, he posed a question of direction for the church. He made a drawing of the new local pastor on a sheet of paper standing at the crossroads of two directions. One direction led to a beautiful and ornate large church in the bairro (neighborhood). The other direction led to a few small home churches that kept multiplying and multiplying until they covered the city, the nation and even spread over the whole world. Then the author asked,

It is your choice, would you like to see this church develop into a large church that will become a monument in this community, or would you like to see this church develop through multiplication until it covers the earth? You can pursue either, but what is in your heart, mind and spirit will determine everything you do from this point on.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See "Strategic Start Up Plan For: Oasis Church," 5.

⁴⁶ Though there may be exceptions, too often quick growth in both Brazil and America reflect a lot of transfer growth from other churches. The church fills up with previous Christians rather than new converts. It may not be the main objective of the new church, but it is often the reality.

⁴⁷ The author said this on April 12, 2013 during one of his last prayer meetings with TFC before he and his family would depart from Brazil and begin a new phase of ministry.

God can bless the small church to become a large church, but it should never happen at the expense of multiplying through church planting. If what the church does cannot be multiplied, it should be brought into question. Every church can make disciples of all nations.

Transcultural Family Church must financially model its expectations upon the new church plant in Raposos. The church is financially supported through its tithes and offerings. These monies are put into a general fund in a bank of its choosing. The general fund covers the monthly expenses of the church. The Biblical support for tithing and giving of offerings, from Abraham to Malachi and into the New Testament,⁴⁸ is taught in both the Life In the Word (LIW) classes and is part of the subject matter in the one-to-one discipleship within the cell group system. The new converts and members of the first cell group would receive teaching about tithes and offerings.⁴⁹ This is fundamental to the church in Raposos becoming self-supporting from the beginning of its formation.

It is important to cast a church planting vision to the contacts in Raposos from the start of the new church. In this way they will see the church as always moving in the direction of multiplication. The new members, who are experiencing a new church plant first-hand, are already spiritually preparing to multiply themselves. As they become part of the new church, they realize that the life and growth of the church is not only for Raposos, but for other cities and nations of the world. From the beginning they were

⁴⁸ Abraham before the law - Genesis 14:17-20; Jacob - 28:22; During the Law -Numbers 18:21-29; Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Malachi 3:8-12; After the Law it is not abolished - Matthew 23:23; The New Testament encourages giving joyfully - 2 Corinthians 9:7; Hebrews 7:5-8.

⁴⁹ Teaching about tithes and offerings is taught in lesson twelve of the first Foundations class. However, it is not the first thing taught to new converts. The first exposure and opportunity to participate in tithes and offerings for the church in Raposos came during the combined service with TFC in Belo Horizonte on May 5, 2013. The lesson on tithes and offerings in the first Foundations class came subsequent.

taught that what they do in Raposos will be multiplied in other cities and nations through them. The *missio Dei* is realized in birth and lived through the growth and multiplication of the church.

Transcultural Family Church eliminated many of the “traditional” church planting expenses. It did not rent a building, buy sound equipment, or purchase other supplies needed for administration, services or marketing. It did not supply a salary for leadership or others that help in the church. The church in Raposos must supply all of their own church needs. However, the financial needs were minimal when the church began. It started as a cell group meeting in the house of one of the contacts. The church developed into a house church. When the members recognize the need for more space and a hall to have services, the principles of tithes and offerings will become relevant to their needs and situation. They receive their own tithes and offerings, will eventually open a bank account, and prepare to provide for their basic needs as a church. Their first hall will be rented by the church in Raposos. They will have full ownership of this responsibility, recognizing that they too can plant a church in the future following this same model because it is a reproducible model. The mother church was encouraged to give free-will offerings to the work in Raposos, but did not budget it into its annual accounts. The only expenses budgeted into the TFC’s account for the church in Raposos was travel expenses for members and leaders from TFC who helped plant the church in Raposos. This money did not come from the general fund or tithes and offerings of TFC. It came from a separate missions account. The missions fund and the general fund of TFC are always kept in separate bank accounts to prevent mixing of the two funds. The church in

Raposos would also be encouraged to open a separate missions account between six months and one year after officially functioning as a church.

The missions fund of Transcultural Family Church comes from giving towards missions in the church. Separate giving envelopes for missions are provided at each service. TFC gives 10% of its monthly tithes and offerings to the missions account. However, the main source of income comes from individual pledges that the members make every six months for missions. All the members are encouraged to “hear from God” the amount they are to pledge for six months to missions. This involves seeking God for direction concerning that amount. Pledges given in faith reflect not only believing in God to provide what one does not have for missions, but is a necessary ingredient in church planting. As members learn to give in faith, that same faith, in their giving, helps them in the future as they “go” with faith on a team to help plant a new church. Their faith grows as they pray, give and “go.” This same faith which involves trusting in God to provide for all their needs must be part of the foundation of each new church plant.

Unity in the vision and participation in the vision are needed in order to fulfill the vision. Transcultural Family Church needed its members to unite and participate in the Raposos church plant through united prayers, spirit-led giving and active participation. The church plant in Raposos provided an ideal opportunity for each member to physically participate in the mission as Raposos is only 23 kilometers away from TFC. Future church plants in other nations will be more difficult for all the members to visit; however, their exposure to the church plant in Raposos solidified the vision of the church to continue planting churches in Brazil and to all nations. Valdir Steuernagel, a missiologist from Brazil, says,

One of the signs of our times is that this is a season of local initiative. People want to own and personally participate. They don't want, for example, just to give money to some distant agency. They want to go where their money goes and want to know the people they are helping. This is a time of partnership and participation – which should be celebrated.⁵⁰

The time of “partnership and participation” should be celebrated starting in the local church. Certainly it should go beyond the context of the local church mission through networking with other churches, mission agencies and social outreach groups. TFC needed its members to partner with them as well as participate in the vision to plant a church in Raposos and other places in the future. However, the vision should start with the local church mission. The local church model is the perfect place for those who are giving to participate in the lives and ministry of those to whom the church is reaching.

Planting churches through relationships, personal evangelism, cell groups and house churches reduces the cost of church planting to a minimum. This is how Transcultural Family Church approached the new church plant in Raposos. This also modeled to the church in Raposos how to plant its first church in another town in the future.

VII. PREPARATION

In preparation for the church plant in Raposos, Transcultural Family Church set forth a six month period of preparation, outreach and training for the launch of the new church. A budget was created to cover the monthly travel expenses to and from Raposos.

⁵⁰ Valdir Steuernagel, “Learning from Escobar...and beyond,” in *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 131.

Included in the budget was lodging and food expenses needed by a team of two for about four weekends commencing after the second month.⁵¹

FIRST MONTH

The first month⁵² began with prayer and fasting for Raposos, the new church plant, and for TFC in its role as a mother church and its need to have workers committed to the new church plant. Each member was encouraged to pray every day for the above needs. TFC also prayed for the new work during their weekly prayer meetings. Fasting at least one meal per day was encouraged for the whole month. A more intense week of fasting all meals was also scheduled during the first month.⁵³ The goal was to saturate the vision with prayer and unity as the church sought direction from God for the specific details and people involved in the church planting endeavor.

The first month also included two visits to Raposos with the TFC leadership, intercessors, and interested members. They did prayer walks through the city surveying the culture, size, political environment and religious atmosphere. Are there any strongholds in the city that might hinder the spread of the gospel? Which neighborhoods would be good to focus the efforts of TFC in the beginning of the work? What are some of the key social needs within the city? TFC ended each prayer walk with discussion

⁵¹ The Budget for six months came to R\$1.580 [Brazilian Reais] (which was about US\$736.00). Each weekend of outreach R\$50.00 was budgeted – R30.00 for gasoline (the church had a VW Kombi [van] to use) and R\$20 for snacks and drinks. That is R\$200.00 per month. However, the third and fourth month also included R\$100.00 for lodging plus R\$40 extra to cover additional food expenses. This would cover the costs of two people staying for two weekends in Raposos. The total budget for the third and fourth month was R\$340.00 per month. The following months went back to R\$200.00 per month as the plan was for Pastor Tiago and his assistant to stay in the house of one of their contacts in Raposos during the fifth through the sixth month. An extra R\$100 was added for December 2012 and March 2013 which had five weekends. The budget came from the mission fund of TFC.

⁵² November 2012.

⁵³ The week of prayer and fasting was November 19-24, 2012.

about the city of Raposos and feedback from each of the members involved. The goal was to be in unity and sensitive to what the Spirit of God may have revealed to any members present on the prayer walk.

The preparation of basic statistical information and prayer pointers about the city of Raposos also took place in the first month.⁵⁴ This information was first presented to the members of TFC during a prayer meeting⁵⁵ and was used in subsequent prayer meetings, services and cell group meetings when praying for Raposos and the vision to plant a church. A physical presentation was made and hung on the wall of the church so that all the members could see it during every service and function in the church. Bookmarks were also made so that the members could carry it with them and pray every day for the work in Raposos.

In the first month a group of three intercessors, specifically for the work in Raposos, was confirmed. It is imperative that prayer and the group of intercessors be firmly established to prepare the ground so that the church may be planted. This closed group of intercessors met weekly to pray as a group. They kept in touch with the pastor of TFC and the leadership involved in the work in Raposos concerning prayer needs and direction for the new church plant.

Confirmation of the TFC leadership overseeing the work in Raposos was also made certain in the first month. Leadership for Raposos was a priority focus for the month of prayer and fasting. The new work needed a leader from TFC to begin the work. Though the goal was to develop local leaders from Raposos to lead the church, TFC

⁵⁴ See Appendix 5 – Mission Outreach to Raposos.

⁵⁵ This prayer meeting was on November 23, 2012.

needed a leader or missions team that would be committed to Raposos and see the local leaders developed to the point of being able to run the church. Since none of the leaders or members of TFC responded to the call to commit themselves to the work in Raposos, the pastor of TFC became the leader. The options were made as simple as possible:

1. A TFC leader oversees the church plant in Raposos. He commits to the church plant for at least one year or until the local leadership is developed to the point of leading the church. He is assisted by another member of TFC during the whole process. A team of two plants the church with the help and support of the members of TFC.
2. A TFC leader is either not able or available to oversee the church plant in Raposos. In this case, the pastor of TFC will oversee the church plant in Raposos with an assistant helping him in Raposos and an assistant helping him with TFC. Both assistants will be seen as potential pastors and will be developed by the lead pastor in all aspects of pastoring the church so that both the church in Raposos and Belo Horizonte can continue functioning when the lead pastor is in the other location. This model requires three key leaders. The pastor will still run TFC and start the new church in Raposos. Each location will have two key leaders, the pastor and one of his assistants.⁵⁶

Though the first option may be ideal, both options allowed TFC to plant a church in Raposos. In the case of TFC, the second option became the only option. Pastor Tiago led the outreach to Raposos with an assistant and had another assistant help him in Belo

⁵⁶ Both options were gleaned from a Latin American conference on church planting that the author attended in Pouso Alegre, Brazil, on October 11-14, 2012. Rick Seaward taught on "Proposed Church Planting Ways." The author simplified and contextualized the principles of leadership over the new church plant and the mother church to apply to TFC in Belo Horizonte.

Horizonte. As Raposos is not too far away from Belo Horizonte, members were encouraged to spend a day in Raposos to help with evangelism and visitation on a regular basis. However, the leaders over Raposos were to do most of the follow-up with the viable contacts because they spent more time in Raposos than the other members. If, along the way, other members felt the need to be more involved in the work in Raposos, they could join the team of two and help in a greater dimension.⁵⁷

SECOND TO SIXTH MONTHS

Evangelism began in the second month. Transcultural Family Church planned weekly outings to Raposos for 4-6 hours of evangelism and visitation. It happened on Saturday so that working members had an opportunity to be involved. The team of two (Pastor Tiago and his assistant) were encouraged to spend a weekend in Raposos at least twice a month to build deeper relationships with the people. They were to leave Belo Horizonte on Friday night and return on Sunday afternoon, in time for the evening service at TFC.⁵⁸ Travel expenses, lodging and food were to be provided for by the missions fund of TFC. Lodging, however, would only be covered for the first few weekends of staying in Raposos as the team of two would be encouraged to find other lodging arrangements through the new found contacts.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Various members of TFC did help in Raposos, but none of them became regular help to the church planting effort.

⁵⁸ TFC does not have a Sunday morning service. The main service is Sunday night – which is typical in Brazilian culture.

⁵⁹ This involves faith, finding the “person of peace” in Raposos and building relationships with the people in Raposos. Staying in their homes strengthens relationships and the dynamism needed in a new church plant. Unfortunately, Pastor Tiago and his assistant became so busy with the church in Belo Horizonte and the transition of the mission pastor (author) preparing to leave Brazil and pass TFC fully to Pastor Tiago and the local leadership that they never spent a full weekend (overnight) in Raposos. This made a significant difference in the pace of the growth of the church in Raposos as will be noted in Chapter six.

As new contacts received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, time for evangelism was cut back slightly to give more time for follow-up and discipling. Forming discipling groups that meet in the home of a contact was encouraged. These discipling groups would develop into cell groups that represent both new and developing Christians.⁶⁰

The process of moving a new contact to becoming a viable member and future leader in the church can be seen in three phases.⁶¹ The first phase is *consolidation with Jesus*. This involves the need of evangelism, visitations and discipling as people become committed to Jesus. The second phase is *consolidation with the word of God, a Christian lifestyle and commitment*. This happens through discipleship and the formation of cell groups. The third phase is *consolidation with the church*. This happens through contact with other cell groups, members, services and the various activities of the church. These three phases represent a process by which new contacts can be moved through stages of spiritual maturity that will prepare them as potential leaders and missionaries in the church. The Christian Development Program helps them move through these phases in the new church plant. As the church was new, Life in the Word (LIW) classes and leadership training classes could have been expedited on a case-by-case basis for teachable and desiring new members in Raposos.⁶²

⁶⁰ Only one cell group was officially formed and eventually became a house church. However, another potential cell group was preparing to be formed when the church was inaugurated. This group would eventually join the house church for weekly services; thus, having one house church with two cell groups.

⁶¹ The author, while pioneering the church in Belo Horizonte, developed these three phases while seeking God on how to simplify and illustrate to his leaders how the church can facilitate the development of leaders.

⁶² Pastor Tiago did try to expedite the discipleship training of the host and his wife of the cell group. At times he went to Raposos twice over the weekend or once during the week and once on the weekend.

SIXTH MONTH

All the contacts were brought together in special gatherings during the sixth month. Events that accentuate fellowship and unity among all of the contacts honed them in on the formation and purpose of the church in Raposos. A conducive home of one of the contacts was used to have a prayer meeting together. A weekly church service that celebrates the unity of the contacts and the formation of the corporate church was presented, prayed for and discussed among the new contacts. The first service was planned with the involvement and the participation of the new members. The new service began in the seventh month in the home of the married couple who hosted the cell group.⁶³ The first official service did not incur any expenses.⁶⁴ Pastor Tiago served the new church members Holy Communion. The church was inaugurated.⁶⁵

VIII. CONCLUSION

What can God do? He is the source and strength of everything that is possible. He opens the heavens and gives insight into the direction He desires. He gives vision to His church so that it might fulfill His will. Vision is seeing the possibilities of what God can do. God has a vision for His church. It must be sought after and received with the heart, mind and soul. It must be pursued with all strength, ability and desire. Once received, it

However, it was still not enough time with the new contacts to advance them as much as he would have liked.

⁶³ This service was on May 12, 2013.

⁶⁴ The members were taught that the church service could be held in various other locations which may include: a park, under a big tree, a garage or some other location that does not incur costs. The decision to rent a hall must come from the new members and be financially supported by the new members through their tithes and offerings.

⁶⁵ It is common for evangelical churches in Brazil to invite other churches to participate in their inauguration. However, for a home church this is inadvisable. The members should celebrate what God is doing in their midst. A later "open inauguration" to other churches may be considered when the church has the financial means to support this event. The important thing is that the church has begun.

must be surrounded by a stewardship that sees it take place. It is a responsibility that embraces the vision, enables it to happen and sees it through to completion. This embraced responsibility compels one to disciple and train as well as develop a structure that can sustain the vision. The formation of cell groups, a program of development and leadership training strengthen the church and equip it to reproduce itself. However, the foundation of all development is in prayer. Prayer must come before, after and saturate all that the vision prompts the church to do. Prayer is the key to the gate of vision and the maintaining force in fulfilling it. Financial obligations should neither impede the vision nor become the requirement in fulfilling the vision. Finances are given with joy, received with gratefulness, but not used to empower. The Holy Spirit empowers His church, not the checkbook. Preparation to fulfill the vision requires a viable plan of action that thrusts the vision into reality. The local church can reproduce itself.

Transcultural Family Church stands before a gateway of opportunity, to multiply itself through church planting. Planting a church in the city of Raposos was a first step in many steps to come. It can be done and it must be done. Lessons were learned along the way. Improvements need to be made. People were challenged. Mistakes almost became inevitable in the recognition of human frailty. Yet, the Spirit of God was with His church, loves His people and empowered them to do things beyond themselves. All of this was done for the glory of the Son of God. May the name that is above all names be glorified in the multiplication of His church, His body, and His bride.

CHAPTER 6

OUTCOMES

I. OVERVIEW

There was an air of excitement as the members of Transcultural Family Church (TFC) prepared and pondered over the privilege God gave them to plant a new church. Developing a model for expeditious church planting was facilitated by the unanimous desire to “give birth” to a new body of believers.¹ Could this small church in Belo Horizonte truly plant another church? This chapter will reflect on the outcomes of TFC planting a church in the city of Raposos. An evaluation of the preparation, final results and future possibilities will be considered. The emergence of a new church that also came as a result of the developed model for church planting will also be recognized. Finally, implications for future church planting through small churches will be considered as it applies to TFC and the church in general.

II. THE CHURCH IN RAPOSOS

Six months of preparation and execution came to a close when the host and members of the first cell group in Raposos joined TFC for the Sunday church service in Belo Horizonte.² It was an opportunity for the members of TFC to see and hear the testimonies of those who were a part of the new church in Raposos and also provide an occasion for the group from Raposos to meet the members in Belo Horizonte. The

¹ The vision to plant another church in six months was presented to the church during a prayer meeting on October 19, 2012. The hearts of the leadership and members had already been prepared with a desire to plant another church through the vision of the church. Therefore, planting a new church in six months was unanimously agreed upon. At this point, the location of the new church plant was not yet confirmed.

² The combined service was on May 5, 2013.

expeditious church planting model worked – a new church was born.³ It was a house church consisting of one cell group with preparation to begin a second cell group soon afterwards.

III. EVALUATIONS

Transcultural Family Church fulfilled the vision of planting a new church in Raposos in six months. Though TFC achieved its goal, is there anything that could have possibly hindered the fulfillment of the vision? Should anything be changed or adjusted in the model for expeditious church planting? What could have been done better? In evaluating the church plant in Raposos one must acknowledge that God is the unifying and determining force that enables any plan, model or approach to both function and bear fruit. Human beings inevitably make mistakes. It is faith in God and His vision that enable His people to overcome every hindrance and receive His grace.

TFC could have done a better job in progressing through the project design. The following evaluations are significant for the implementation of the vision for expeditious church planting:

A. OUTREACH AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

General church participation from TFC was good. TFC always had volunteers who would go to Raposos to evangelize and visit people. However, the TFC members were not all consistent in regular outreach to Raposos. Some went one week and then missed a few weeks. A lack of regular and timely follow-up decelerated the impact with new contacts in Raposos. New contacts need more than monthly and irregular visits -

³ The actual inauguration of the first church service in Raposos was on May 12, 2013.

weekly and regular visitations are ideal. TFC tried to resolve this by coupling irregular outreach members with more consistent members so that follow-up on the contacts could be assured. This worked well for a while until some of those who were more consistent also became “irregular” after a couple of months. The solution to this problem would be to have a committed core group of people focused on the new church plant for the duration required to disciple the new contacts. Though it was part of the plan, this desired ideal struggled through the six months of preparation and outreach to Raposos. Possibly the six months of preparation and outreach should have been extended to nine months so that the first few months could focus more on prayer, challenge and preparation for a “core team” of members and leaders who would commit to the six months of preparation and outreach as well as the following six months, after the church begins, to continue follow-up, discipleship and leadership development.

Within the project design, a team of two (a TFC leader overseeing the new church plant with an assistant or the lead pastor of TFC with an assistant) are encouraged to spend a weekend (Friday night until Sunday afternoon) in Raposos at least twice a month. This is to build deeper relationships with the contacts, have more time to disciple, and start new cell groups. Numerous and diverse excuses prevented this from happening.⁴ Had it been done, presumably more contacts would have been discipled, multiple cell

⁴ The author, who was the mission pastor and pioneer of TFC in Belo Horizonte, was also very busy preparing his family to move out of Brazil and pass all the responsibilities of the church to Pastor Tiago and the local leadership. Both the author and Pastor Tiago were overwhelmed with all that had to be done as well as planting a new church in Raposos. The author had no choice when to depart Brazil as his leadership in VFC Singapore already set a date for him and his family to depart Brazil in May 2013. He wanted to stay longer to give more time to transition TFC to Pastor Tiago and follow-up on the new church plant in Raposos, but the decision was not his to make. Therefore, there was added stress to the timeframe of planting the church in Raposos. However, in hindsight, Pastor Tiago and his assistant still could have spent two weekends a month in Raposos since the author was still in Belo Horizonte and could have assisted Pastor Tiago’s other assistant with the services in Belo Horizonte.

groups would have been formed, and potential leaders would have been identified and developed.

TFC is challenged with the continuing mission to see the church in Raposos develop and mature. Continued discipleship and leadership development needs to take place in both TFC and Raposos to ensure the future growth of both churches. The new members of the church in Raposos need to participate in the evangelism and outreach to their own city as well as preparing for their own church plant in the future. The experience of seeing a new church formed will help them form a new church in the future.

B. PRAYER

The prayer walks during the first month went well. It was through these prayer walks in Raposos that one of the leaders and a couple of members felt a burden to continue to pray for Raposos and the church planting endeavor. The team of intercessors was formed. Everything was going as planned until the intercessors began to feel burdened for other needs within TFC and the community in Belo Horizonte. Their focus on Raposos slowly diminished as their focus on Belo Horizonte grew. Though prayers continued for the work in Raposos by the intercessors, the depth and consistency of the focus for the new church plant was not maintained. Meeting together weekly for intercession was managed for a couple of months and then distractions prevented the team from meeting on a regular basis. The lack of consistent focused prayers was felt by those most involved in seeing the vision come to fruition. Perhaps more contacts could have been made, more cell groups formed and a greater degree of harmony and

willingness from all of the TFC members could have been achieved if the proposed focus for the intercessory team had remained consistent.

The leadership of TFC should take greater care and time in choosing the team of intercessors for future church planting. Ideally, people should be chosen who have had experience, understanding, and have been proven through previous involvement in intercessory prayer. However, this is not always possible with a small church. In this case, the leadership should have greater involvement in the training and development of intercessors. Assumptions that certain people understand intercessory prayer should not be made, even if they say they have experience. TFC is guilty of this assumption and has learned to choose intercessors with greater care. A greater prayer “covering” over the new work and its preparation could have been achieved with a greater prayer focus and consistency. Extending the preparation time to nine months may allow a greater emphasis upon the training and development of intercessors within the first three months.

C. TIMEFRAME

Expeditious church planting can be done, but is six months too short a period of time to accomplish the given goals? Six months brought a greater urgency in fulfilling the goal which resulted in less time to properly prepare, train and pray for the new work. Possibly the challenges in preparing a group of intercessors could have been resolved within a nine month to one year projection. Evangelism, cell group formation, and leadership development in Raposos definitely could have been further developed over a period of nine months to a year. As a pilot program, more time is required to develop it within the church. However, once developed, subsequent church planting endeavors

should move along more smoothly. Nine months should be adequate for the second church plant. Experience gained through each church planting endeavor will allow the praxis of the vision to accelerate. A six month goal of planting churches may be achieved more smoothly as TFC continues to plant more churches and its members are accustomed to church planting.

New churches may need more time to develop a church planting program while mature churches that have already been planting churches require less time. Thus, a timeframe of six months may be advantageous for churches with church planting experience. Why? The excitement of seeing the fruit of one's labor creates spiritual adrenaline that desires to see more of what God can and will do for His glory! When the fruit is not seen, the excitement diminishes. This often results in veering away from the vision and possibly moving into complacency. Christians, in general, want to see the kingdom of God advance. Celebrating the birth of new churches is an activity in which most Christians desire to participate in some way, shape or form – even if they are not physically able to go to the location of the new church plant. However, most Christians, in this author's experience, do not know how to participate. Willing members are not always given opportunity to be actively involved in church planting. This can change and should change through a church planting vision in the local church.

D. LOOKING BACK – LOOKING FORWARD

Hindsight is a great revealer of sound principles and achieved goals. It is also a significant revealer of faults, mistakes and theories that do not work. The goal of planting a new church was achieved. Yet the achievement was buttressed with the fragility of

human inconsistency. It is in this place of weakness that the voice of Jesus ministers to the soul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”⁵ How can power be found in weakness? As in Acts 1:8, the Greek word for “power” in 2 Corinthians 12:9 is *dunamis*. The weakness of humanity gives opportunity for the might and power of God to be a witness through His church. His grace allows this power to manifest through those who desire to fulfill His will. The church in Raposos was planted by the grace of God. Could the key be in His grace that is sufficient to fulfill the task and vision entrusted to a willing church so that His name might be glorified? In this case, the experience and maturity of a local church should not be a factor in fulfilling the vision of God to plant churches. His grace is sufficient. Transcultural Family Church bears witness to this truth. Yet, TFC not only relied upon His grace, but prepared and planned the best they could to fulfill the vision of God. They did not only sit on God’s word, they did something about it which resulted in the birth of a new church. A church that reproduces itself through church planting extends His kingdom throughout the earth. It is God who receives all the glory!

IV. A NEW CHURCH EMERGES

The author and his family left Brazil in May 7, 2013, days before the official inauguration of the church in Raposos on May 12, 2013. What would happen with the vision to plant churches? Would Pastor Tiago and TFC continue with the vision of being a church that plants churches? The vision continues. The year 2014 began with a family

⁵ 2 Corinthians 12:9. In the context of this verse the apostle Paul recognizes that there was given to him “a thorn” in his flesh which would keep him from becoming conceited (2 Corinthians 12:7). The specificity of the thorn is not revealed. Paul pleaded with the Lord to take it away (verse 8). It remained. It was in his weakness that the *dunamis* (power) of God was made perfect. Paul is an example to the church of being a witness for Christ.

from TFC being trained and prepared to plant a new church in the city of Prado, Brazil.⁶ Prado is about 500 miles northeast of Belo Horizonte. They relocated to Prado in March and by April 23, 2014 they already had twenty-one cell groups formed in the new church.⁷ This new church is accelerating at a rate well beyond the experience with the church in Raposos. The family who is planting the church in Prado were active participants in the outreach to Raposos. Their experience in TFC and Raposos prepared them for Prado. The church in Prado is the fruit of the works in both Raposos and Belo Horizonte. The expansion of the church is a reality when the given vision is believed and activated.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The development of a model for expeditious church planting bore fruit in and through Transcultural Family Church in Belo Horizonte. The church, itself a re-birth, was able to achieve the goal of planting new churches and fulfill the vision of being a church that plants churches. The journey of preparing to plant a church in Raposos prepared TFC for its next church plant in Prado. Each time the church multiplies itself it learns and prepares for continued multiplication. TFC will be planting churches throughout Brazil and the world.

The implications for the small church are enormous. Simply, if TFC can do it, small churches around Brazil and the world can do it. TFC serves not only as a model for the churches in the Brazilian *Associação de Igrejas Evangélicas Transculturais – AIET* (Association of Transcultural Evangelical Churches), but also as a model of how a small

⁶ Prado is located in the state of Bahia in Brazil.

⁷ Pastor Tiago, e-mail message to author, April 23, 2014.

church can plant churches in places all over the world. The experiences of TFC may have been imperfect and at times not ideal; yet, it still gave birth. TFC has become a church that continuously plants churches – a reproducing church. An expeditious church planting model not only works, but can and should be done. May the gospel of Jesus Christ reach all peoples and cultures through the multiplication of His church!

VI. CONCLUSION: THE JOURNEY BEGINS AGAIN

The journey that began in the author's life many years ago continues through the doors of opportunity that God opens to see His kingdom and His church cover the earth. The challenge of developing a model for expeditious church planting embarked the author on a journey of church planting through the church he planted in Belo Horizonte (TFC). Exploration of the Biblical framework for church planting, reviewing a historical approach to church planting, and considering dynamics of churches that plant churches have solidified a foundation of indigenous principles and the expansion of the church. The development of an approach to church planting through a small local church yielded some undesirable realities concerning commitment and preparation. However, the application of the vision bore fruit. Objectives were achieved albeit through the grace and strength of God. The church was planted. It not only can be done, it should be done. This test of the vision has solidified itself in the heart, mind and soul of the author. Whatever he does, thence forth, must see the outcome of the church being strengthened, developed and planted in the ideological Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

When a vision is embraced, it finds a home in which to reside, grow and develop. The vision to see churches that plant churches cannot be removed from the heart of God

as it touches the heart of humanity. As eyes that have been opened, the vision lights the way. History rejoices with the fulfillment of God's heart on earth as it is in heaven.

Seeing His passion fulfilled through embracing His will leaves no doubt as to purpose in life. His kingdom must extend throughout the earth. His love must be given opportunity to be embraced by all peoples and nations. His truth will set people free. Humanity in freedom finds its purpose in His body and as His bride who reflects His image.

Multiplication is the result of perpetual reproduction in and through His church. God's words in Genesis 1:28 echo throughout the soul of every believer in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, "Be fruitful and multiply."

APPENDIX 1

CHURCH PLANTING QUESTIONNAIRE

For Jeff Beck's DMin. Thesis-Project

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

- A. Name: _____
- B. Official ministry title: (Mission Pastor? Church Planting Trainer? ...etc.)

- C. Nationality: _____
- D. Home/sending church name and country and region (if applicable):

- E. Mission field country: _____ Mission field city:

- F. Population of mission field city:

- G. Date you arrived on your mission field (year and month):

- H. Family members on mission field with you and ages of children:

- I. Do all your family members have the same nationality that you do?

- J. If not, what are they?

- K. How long is your commitment or term in Brazil? How many years or months? _____
- L. Are you open to stay longer? _____ How long?

- M. Do you have a team with you? _____ How many? _____
- N. Which countries do they come from?

- O. How long is their commitment on your mission field?

- P. Have you had previous experience in church planting?

- Q. If yes, where?

- R. When (dates)? _____
- S. For how long [period of time spent planting the church(es)]?

- *If more than one church planting experience, please answer the above questions for each one.*

II. VFC (Victory Family Centre) VISION:

- A. What is the VFC vision for you and your team in Brazil?

- B. How many churches are you expected to plant during your time on your present mission field?

- C. How are you expected to do it?

- D. What is the frequency of church planting supposed to be? Every 6 months ...every three months...etc.

- E. When your term on this present mission field is over, according to the VFC vision, how many churches should be planted?

- F. How many leaders and pastors should you have raised up?

- G. What do you feel are some of the greatest strengths in the VFC vision?
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- H. What do you feel are some of the areas in the VFC vision that need to be further developed or re-evaluated? Are there any weaknesses? If yes, is it a weakness in the vision or the implementation of the vision? In other words, should some aspects change concerning the methods of fulfilling the vision? Please elaborate.
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-
- I. Please share any more details of the VFC vision entrusted to you on your present mission field that will help me understand VFC's expectations of you (and your team) on your present mission field:
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-
-
-
-
-
-
-

III. **YOUR PRESENT MISSION:**

- A. How long have you been on this present mission field (please note today's date)?
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-
-
- B. When is a church a church...how do you define church?
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-
-
- C. In your context, how do you know that or when a church is planted?
-
-
-

D. How many churches have been planted?

E. What is the frequency of the planting (every 3 or 6 months...or different for each one)?

F. How many local leaders are under your care?

G. How are you discipling them?

F. Could you please list each church, starting with your first church, that is under your care? Also please include the following information:

- Name of church
- Location (city, neighborhood/bairro)
- Pastor over each church (please note if the pastor is you, a member of your missions team, or a local leader)
- Associate pastors and leaders in each church
- Names and background experience or training for each pastor or leader under your care. For example, have they had previous Bible School training or experience in other churches before yours? Or are they new Christians without any previous training?

1. _____

2. _____

(If you need more space, please feel free to insert as many lines as you need)

IV. YOUR PERSONAL VISION:

As a missionary/minister I strive not only to fulfill the vision entrusted to me, but also to receive fresh vision from God concerning my particular mission field and the people and church(es) entrusted to me on the mission field. I also desire to receive vision from God for my own life and the life of my family.

- A. Please share with me your personal vision for your mission field, the people/leaders, and the church(es) God entrusted to you?

- B. What is your personal vision for your own life and family?

V. YOUR PERSONAL EVALUATION:

- A. How do you feel about what has been accomplished thus far in your ministry and mission in Brazil?

- B. Do you feel that you will be able to fulfill the vision?

- C. Are your potential leaders/pastors responding the way in which you had hoped?

- D. What do they still need to fulfill the vision?
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-
-
- E. Are you able to provide what they need through your discipling with them?
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-
- F. Do you feel adequately equipped to fulfill the vision?
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-
-
- G. What do you feel you need in order to fulfill the vision?
-
-
-
- H. Can the churches you planted plant new churches within six months (more or less)?
-
-
-
- I. What do they need in order to do that?
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-
-
-
- J. Do you have potential local leaders that could fulfill your role?
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-
-
- K. If yes, when do you plan to move them into that role?
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-
-
-
- L. How will your role change?
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- M. Whether your church(es) is(are) able or not to plant a new church within six months, do you feel that all churches, in general, could plant a new church within six months? Why or why not?
-
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-
-
- N. What do you feel are the main ingredients needed in church planting that will facilitate churches planting churches through local congregations?
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-
-
- O. What advice would you give to a future missionary who wants to plant churches that plant local churches in Brazil on a continuous basis?
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-
-
- P. What advice would you give to a future Brazilian pastor who wants to plant churches that plant local churches in Brazil on a continuous basis?
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-
-
- Q. How important are “signs and wonders” in church planting?
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-
-
-
- R. Will it make a difference?
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-
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-
- S. Have you experienced “signs and wonders” in your church planting efforts in Brazil (whether it be through you or one of your team members)?
-
-
-
-
- T. If yes, could you elaborate...share your testimony and how it affected your church planting efforts? (please feel free to share as many as possible)
-
-
-
-

U. What prevents church planting from taking place? In your area, what are the factors that hinder, or would hinder, churches planting churches from taking place?

V. How do you think these areas can be overcome?

W. In your experience, what are at least three strengths, in general, in the Brazilian evangelical churches?

X. Are you attempting to include these strengths in your church planting efforts? If yes, how?

Y. In your experience, what are at least three weaknesses, in general, in the Brazilian evangelical churches?

- Z. Are you attempting to avoid these three weaknesses in your church planting efforts? If yes, how?

VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

- A. What do you feel God is doing through the nation of Brazil?

- B. Has God given you any prophetic insight into your mission, church planting and Brazil?

- C. If yes, could you share with me whatever God releases you to share?

Thank you again for your help and participation in this questionnaire. May God's hand be upon you, your family and your ministry!

APPENDIX 2

CHURCH PLANTING QUESTIONNAIRE

*Summary of questionnaire for Kory
Received on August 1, 2013*

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Kory is a church planter from Victory Family Centre (VFC) in Singapore. VFC sent him to plant multiple churches starting in the city of Castelo, Brazil. Castelo, with a population of 30,000, is located in the state of Espirito Santo. Kory arrived in Castelo with his wife, two sons (ages eight and eleven), and five church planting team assistants in October of 2011. Kory made a three year commitment to plant churches in Brazil. His five team assistants (four Singaporeans and one Brazilian) made a nine month commitment in Brazil to help Kory plant churches. Kory has had previous experience planting a church in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 1998. He was in Belo Horizonte for two years.

II. VFC (VICTORY FAMILY CENTRE) VISION:

Kory says that VFC expects him to plant 25 churches in two years. After six months in Castelo he is supposed to start a new church in a new town every three months. He will do this by raising-up local church planters in the initial churches he plants. Each new church will be in a different, but nearby, town. Every six months he plans to move his residence to another town located in the proximity of future targeted church plants. He hopes to have 25 pastors and 125 leaders developed by the end of two years.

The strength of the VFC vision, according to Kory, is that it gives the local church a sense of calling and urgency to fulfill the Great Commission. It also empowers and enables the local members to be leaders and church planters.

Kory does recognize that there will be adjustments involved in the implementation of the vision. He is concerned about the availability of the members to execute the vision due to family constraints. He is also concerned about the cost factor involved in planting multiple churches. A budget for rental of halls for church services is not included.

III. YOUR PRESENT MISSION:

Kory had been on the mission field in the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo for one year and nine months when he filled out the Church Planting Questionnaire (July 2013).

Kory considers a church a church when believers are praising and worshipping Christ together, have a sense of belonging and commitment to one another, and are striving together to achieve the purpose and vision of the local church. He and his team have thus far planted two churches with a combined leadership of six local people. He is discipling them with discipleship notes from VFC in Singapore (translated from English to Portuguese), evangelism, devotions, helping in the ministry services and cell group lessons.

Kory is pastoring both churches under his care. He is developing four associate pastors (two for each church) and two leaders that are focusing on outreach to a third location (future church plant). Five of his leaders in training are new Christians without any previous training. One of his leaders was a backslidden Christian with some exposure to the evangelical church.

IV. YOUR PERSONAL VISION:

Kory would like to see the people and leaders of the churches in which he is planting to plant churches in every town in the state of Espirito Santo, Brazil.

His personal vision for his own life and family is to glorify, please and serve God.

V. YOUR PERSONAL EVALUATION:

Kory feels that much more needs to be done and that time has limited him in fulfilling his mission in Brazil. He does not feel that the target of planting twenty-five churches in two years will be achieved. Though he has been equipped for the task, he would like more input from experienced church planters. In order to fulfill the vision, Kory feels that he needs to experience a mighty move of God in the lives of the members and leaders to give themselves fully to the vision.

Some of Kory's leaders responded to the vision the way in which he had hoped. However, he feels that they need more equipping and training. He feels that he is only able to provide them with a basic foundation. However, he does have potential local leaders that could fulfill his present role in overseeing the churches and planting new churches. His plans were to move some of them into that role within about two months. When this takes place he will continue to equip and train leaders in the newly targeted towns.

Kory feels that the churches he just planted could plant new churches within six months if they have total commitment to fulfilling the vision. He says the main ingredients needed for churches to plant new churches through the local congregation are: commitment, passion, equipping and training. When the local leaders, of any given church, have these ingredients they can plant a new church within six months.

Factors that would hinder churches from planting churches in the state of Espirito Santo would include the mindset of the people on what constitutes a church – a building or an assembly of people, and the belief that the pastor does all the work. These factors can be overcome by teaching the people and praying that God will give them a new mindset. It will also include teaching, equipping and involving the leaders in the work of the ministry so that they can gain more confidence. Kory would encourage future missionaries to Brazil and future Brazilian pastors to share, teach, equip and train members and leaders towards fulfilling the vision.

Kory says that “signs and wonders” are essential in church planting and that it will make a positive difference. He testifies of how new converts came to become part of the church plant as a result of deliverance from demonic oppressions, panic anxiety, depression, addictions and financial crisis. Some of these people who were delivered are presently the core leaders of the church plants.

Praying for miracles, healings, casting out demons, preaching from the Bible and moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit are strengths, Kory believes, in which the Brazilian evangelical churches, in general, practice. He is attempting to include these strengths in his church planting effort. He is praying for signs and wonders to confirm the preaching of the Word. He is also praying for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In his experience, Kory believes that members neither reading their Bibles, nor involved in ministries, evangelism and missions are weaknesses, in general, of Brazilian evangelical churches. He also feels that members are usually not taught the Bible doctrines systematically and to apply them in their lives. Kory is attempting to avoid

these weaknesses by teaching and encouraging his members to have daily devotions as well as participation in various ministries, evangelism and missions. He teaches Biblical doctrines through discipleship materials supplied by Victory Family Centre in Singapore (translated in Portuguese). He also tries to help them apply it to their everyday living.

VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

Kory feels that God is raising up local bodies of believers all over Brazil who are Biblically sound and committed Christians who are involved in the ministries of the church, moving in the gifts of the Spirit, and participating in the Great Commission (evangelism, praying, giving, and going to missions).

He does not feel that God has given him any prophetic insight into his mission, church planting or Brazil.

APPENDIX 3

CHURCH PLANTING QUESTIONNAIRE

*Summary of questionnaire for George
Received on August 07, 2013*

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

George is a church planter from Victory Family Centre (VFC) in Singapore. VFC sent him to plant multiple churches starting in the city of Indaial, Brazil. Indaial, with a population of 60,000, is located in the state of Santa Catarina. George arrived in Indaial with his wife, two children (ages six and seven), and five church planting team assistants on March 11, 2012. George made a three year commitment to plant churches in Brazil. He had five team assistants (four Singaporeans and one Brazilian) that made a one year commitment in Brazil to help George plant churches. George has had no previous experience planting churches.

II. VFC (VICTORY FAMILY CENTRE) VISION:

George says that VFC expects him to plant 25 churches in two years. Though this averages out to a little more than one church per month, he is supposed to plant multiple new churches every three months. George functions as a church planting trainer who needs to develop local leaders and pastors who can run cell groups and church services within a few months. Then he moves to another city, bringing along with him some of the local leaders from the previous church plants, to plant new churches in various other cities.

George says that there are not a fixed number of leaders that he needs to develop in order to fulfill the vision of planting 25 churches in two years. However, he says that

each church needs a pastor to lead each new church and a few people trained in church planting.

George feels that some of the greatest strengths in the VFC vision are its clarity of vision and that it shows urgency in multiplication of churches.

George feels that there are three areas that should be re-evaluated and considered in the approach of planting 25 churches in two years. 1) It is an unrealistic timeframe to achieve the goal of planting new churches every few months. 2) Focus on the speed of church planting without regard to the quality and sustainability of existing churches planted may not produce the desired results. 3) Assumptions to achieve the goals seem too simplified and not realizable in practice based on (his) personal first-hand experience (at the time of filling out this questionnaire).

III. YOUR PRESENT MISSION:

George had been on the mission field in the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina for one year and five months when he filled out the Church Planting Questionnaire (August 2013).

George considers a church a church when it has at least one cell group in a new area or city. This first cell group is considered a house church. Thus, the church is birthed and expected to grow. George and his team had planted three churches at the time he completed this questionnaire. He has ten local leaders under his care. Discipleship notes from VFC in Singapore (translated from English to Portuguese), supplemented with topics that are relevant to address various issues, are used to disciple the new leaders in the church plants. George is pastoring all three of the churches. His ten Brazilian leaders are new Christians without any previous training.

IV. YOUR PERSONAL VISION:

George wants to raise-up leaders who are spiritually matured in terms of their intimacy with God, their full obedience to the Word of God, their knowledge and understanding of the Word, and their faithfulness to carry out the Great Commission. He desires for his leaders to make disciples in their own hometowns, neighboring cities, countries and beyond. He hopes that these leaders will carry the mandate to win souls, train them and send them out to do missions work while training others to do the same as well.

His personal vision is to grow continually in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. As for his wife, that she will continually grow spiritually and that his children will be raised up with the fear of God and be future leaders in the church.

V. YOUR PERSONAL EVALUATION:

George feels that the work has been challenging in terms of influencing people to stay committed to the true calling as a disciple of Christ with the commitment and obedience to be fully involved in church planting. He feels that the work grows much more slowly than he had hoped. He wants to fulfill the vision entrusted to him to plant 25 churches in two years, but he is concerned, based off of his observation of the pace of raising-up leaders from the current churches, that it may be very difficult. George does not feel adequately equipped to fulfill the vision in terms of resources and the timeframe. In order to fulfill the vision, he feels that he needs better local language ability (Portuguese) and transport that would enable him to do evangelism in other cities (he does not have a car or motorcycle which makes traveling to various cities very time consuming).

Only a few of George's leaders responded close to what he had hoped in raising them to become pastors and church planters. He says that his leaders in training need more spiritual maturity. Specifically, they need more knowledge and understanding of the Word, character development and commitment. He feels that he may be able to help them spiritually mature based on the extent that he may be able to influence them spiritually. Even if he is able to help them spiritually mature, he feels that it will take much more than a few months. Realistically, he feels, it will take at least one to two years.

George did feel that he had one or two potential leaders that could fulfill his role at the time he completed this questionnaire. He planned to move them into that role when he felt they are ready which, in his opinion, could take six months to one year. When that change would take place, George's role would continue as a church planting trainer and mentor to them.

George feels that only one of the three churches he planted might be able to plant a new church within a period of six months. In order to do that, his leaders need the following: more knowledge of the Word, a personal walk with God, spiritual maturity and character transformation so that they may be able to win, disciple and train new converts. George says that spiritual counselling skills, communication skills, and leadership skills were definitely lacking in his leaders at the time he filled out this questionnaire.

George says that whether churches, in general, are able to plant a new church within six months depends upon their definition and criterion of church. Some churches may set stringent criteria for a new work to be considered a church. George believes the main ingredients needed in church planting that will facilitate churches planting churches

through local congregations is a strong local language ability, strong leadership and mentoring skills.

When asked what prevents church planting from taking place in your area, George mentioned three things that would hinder churches from planting churches. 1) Lack of spiritual commitment. 2) Lack of genuine transformation of life. 3) Lack of a personal vehicle (as travelling by public transport to other cities in Brazil is very limited). George believes these first two things can be overcome primarily by prayer and fasting for the Lord to change the mindset and touch the hearts of the new converts, and for the Lord to lead the team to the right local people who will become future leaders. He would encourage future missionaries to Brazil and future Brazilian pastors to both the work with a great deal of prayer and fasting for the direction of God, for divine encounters with men and women of peace that will become future committed and effective leaders, for signs and wonders, and against spiritual strongholds.

George says that “signs and wonders” are important to authenticate the word of God and to make people more open to the gospel. He feels that it definitely makes a difference in church planting. He says that most of the believers in his church were converted when they experienced “signs and wonders.” George testifies of an ex-Catholic who asked for a miraculous sign of healing her son from a big lump in his stomach. The missionary team prayed and her son was miraculously healed. Afterwards she became a fully committed leader in the church. She has also been praying for others to be saved. Some of the new converts are results of her prayers. Another example involved another ex-Catholic who was deeply touched by God for the miracle of financial blessings over his life. He is now fully committed to the work of God and winning souls for Christ. A

third example involves a new convert that was delivered from chronic depression. Her husband noticed the change in her which resulted in their marriage being strengthened, an openness to the gospel, and participation in the various meetings and ministries of the church. A further example involves a young man that was delivered from drugs and various vices and is now serving faithfully as a leader in the church.

Though George feels limited in his experience of Brazilian evangelical churches, he does feel that many of the pastors and various churches unite together in common prayer for their respective cities to achieve common spiritual goals. He also feels that the multiple church services throughout the week and a rigorous training program for would-be pastors in the Brazilian Assembly of God are strengths within the Brazilian evangelical community. George was not attempting to include these strengths into his works at the time of filling out this questionnaire because he felt that these strengths focused on building a strong church without regard for the speed of the church planting and ease of duplicating new churches based on the Victory Family Centre “rabbit” church model (“rabbit” is a reference to a book written by Tony and Felicity Dale and George Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant: Why Small Is the New Big for Today’s Church*. This book is in the bibliography).

In general, George feels that there are at least three weaknesses in the Brazilian evangelical churches. 1) The Assembly of God church seems too strict with certain rules like the ladies being required to wear full length dresses and not being allowed to cut their hair. 2) The churches do not seem to have a cell group system like Victory Family Centre. 3) The churches do not seem to focus much on a one-on-one discipling process like Victory Family Centre. He is attempting to avoid these apparent weaknesses by

removing any traditions or practices that are not Biblical. He is also trying to employ a modern approach to church planting without violating principles and commandments in the Bible. George plans to maintain a strong cell group structure as the basic structure of the church. He also plans to maintain a personal one-on-one discipling process using the discipleship material from Victory Family Centre and a focus on spiritual growth and maturity in order to develop strong leaders.

VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

George thinks that God wants to raise-up churches in Brazil with a vision of churches that plant churches through the Victory Family Centre missions program.

He does not feel that God has given him any prophetic insight into his mission, church planting or Brazil. He says that everything is based on advice and direction from the leadership of Victory Family Centre in Singapore.

APPENDIX 4

CHURCH PLANTING QUESTIONNAIRE

*Summary of questionnaire for Jack
Received on August 2, 2013*

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Jack is a church planter from Victory Family Centre (VFC) in Singapore. VFC sent him to plant multiple churches starting in the city of Lajeado, Brazil. Lajeado, with a population of more than 70,000, is located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Jack arrived in Rio Grande do Sul with his wife, seven year old daughter, and five church planting team assistants in March of 2012. Jack made a three year commitment to plant churches in Brazil. His five team assistants (four Singaporeans and one Brazilian) made a nine month commitment in Brazil to help Jack plant churches. Jack has had previous experience planting churches in Chile (1994-1999) and Guatemala (2002-2003).

II. VFC (VICTORY FAMILY CENTRE) VISION:

Jack says that VFC expects him to plant 25 churches in two years. The goal for the frequency of church planting is to plant two new churches every three months which will in turn continue to plant new churches. By the end of two years he should have at least 25 churches that will continue to reproduce like “rabbits” (“rabbit” is a reference to a book written by Tony and Felicity Dale and George Barna, *The Rabbit and the Elephant: Why Small Is the New Big for Today’s Church*. This book is in the bibliography). Jack will do this by raising-up local church planters in the initial churches he plants. Each new church will be in a different, but nearby, town. Every six months he plans to move his residence to another town located in the proximity of future targeted

church plants. He hopes to have 25 pastors with assistants developed by the end of two years.

Jack recognizes a number of strengths within the vision of VFC. 1) It allows every church member to participate in The Great Commission. 2) It makes valuable missions training available to the lay people. 3) It expresses faith in both God and His people. 4) It allows every willing person to express their faith in God through prayer, giving and going. 5) It stretches the believer in terms of spiritual maturity. 6) It is very practical and not just theoretical. 7) It is well-rounded (covers the real gist of gospel preaching cum church planting and not just social work). 8) It has proven to be flexible when needed.

Jack thinks the vision is great, but he sees the implementation of the vision as ever-evolving. He struggles with the theory of planting 25 churches in two years with the reality of not seeing it happen the way in which he had hoped. He desires to see the gap closed between the theory of the vision and the reality of actually doing it. The certainty of living out the vision on the mission field is a bit unclear to Jack. However, he does recognize that the methods used in outreach need to go beyond the traditional forms learned and be flexible enough to be relevant to whichever “ground” one finds himself desiring to plant churches. Jack continues to reach out to as many people as possible and plant churches, but he feels the need to be more patient (which is difficult for him) and perseverant.

III. YOUR PRESENT MISSION:

Jack had been on the mission field in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul for one year and four months when he filled out the Church Planting Questionnaire (July 2013).

Jack considers a church a church when a gathering of God's people come together for His purposes. In his mission, Jack says that a church is when a few house groups have been established. He and his team have thus far planted two churches with two leaders under his care. He is discipling them with discipleship notes from VFC in Singapore (translated from English to Portuguese), evangelism, devotions, leading house meetings, leading prayer meetings and sermon preparation. Jack is discipling both of his leaders to run the churches, one as a lead pastor and the other as an associate pastor. They are both new Christians without any previous training.

IV. YOUR PERSONAL VISION:

Jack envisions God-loving, Holy Spirit filled men and women going out in church planting endeavors and setting towns "on fire" for God. It may start small, but it must spiral into something big (numerically and in terms of faith). He believes in multiplication.

His personal vision is to one day write something that will be beneficial to future missionaries.

V. YOUR PERSONAL EVALUATION:

Jack arrived in Brazil with great expectations and was hoping to see God work exceedingly and above what he had seen in his past two mission fields. But the reality did not match his expectations. This affected him so much that he experienced various emotional stages from being ecstatic to frantically working hard to denial among other emotions until he finally arrived at acceptance of his situation and that God is in control. He continued faithfully with the mission. Though he had not even reached the half-way mark of the number of churches he had hoped to be planted within the vision at the time

of filling out this questionnaire, he was still hopeful in fulfilling the vision of planting 25 churches through the help of God. Though Jack knows that the Holy Spirit is with him, he feels that he could never have learned all that he needed for the job God and VFC entrusted to him. However, he recognized that if he remains faithful, he will have fulfilled what God has called him to do in Brazil.

Jack's two leaders are progressing well as new leaders in training. Jack feels that in a normal situation this is fine; however, their progression does not match the pace needed for a church planting movement. He feels that his leaders need more time, more training and a deeper love relationship with Christ. Jack feels that he is able to provide much of what they need, but that they still need some input from others that will booster their faith, experience and commitment. Ideally, Jack would like his two leaders to replace his role in overseeing the two churches when he would move to another location to plant more churches. When this happens, he would continue to disciple them and Jack would function more in a supervisory capacity meeting with them at least once a week, but not running the meetings in the two churches.

Jack planned to go on a church planting trip with his two leaders in the next town soon after he finished this questionnaire. He said, "Ready or not, we are going." He plans to brief them, encourage them to have faith in the church planting endeavor, and even a little "push" to get them to go and do it. He feels that church planting can be done in six months if it involves sowing the gospel into someone's heart and then helping them to do what they are taught. In other words, good discipling must take place. A person with little experience, but good discipling can still do the job. However, when Jack considers the various levels of spiritual maturity needed in a growing church, he is a bit concerned

about the level of maturity of a new church planter. He feels that proper instructions and a solid systematic basic training are needed in order to facilitate churches planting churches through the local congregation. Hindrances to churches planting churches, according to Jack, are: missing God's timing, over relying on old strategies, wrong mindsets, and wrong expectations. He feels that these can be overcome by a change of mindset, forming new strategies, and having realistic expectations. Jack would encourage future missionaries to Brazil to be natural, real, sincere, and faithful. To future Brazilian pastors, Jack said, "Be focused on the vision...go to the ground and get your hands dirty."

When asked about the importance of "signs and wonders" in church planting Jack responded, "When I came (to Brazil), I was surprised to see an 'overly evangelized' Brazil with an overdose of 'signs and wonders' (emphasized in various evangelical denominations)." He went on to say, "Our team had a fair share of that as well but it has not really yielded the result we expected." Jack gave an example of a lady who was barren for seven years and became pregnant after Jack's team prayed for her. After she gave birth, she said that she still preferred Spiritism. Jack could not understand her logic. Though Spiritism gave her no child, she still stuck with it. She received a miracle, but did not serve God. However, other "signs and wonders" did take place as well. Jobless people received jobs after prayers and various people claimed that they were healed (knee pains, neck pains, etc.) after prayer for them.

Concerning strengths and weaknesses, in general, of Brazilian evangelical churches, Jack had nothing to say. He does not feel that he has mixed enough with others churches in order to give a fair assessment.

VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

Jack feels that God is preparing Brazil for a Church Planting Movement.

He does not feel that God has given him any prophetic insight into his mission, church planting or Brazil.

APPENDIX 5

MISSION OUTREACH TO RAPOSOS

I. BASIC STATISCAL INFORMATION: RAPOSOS

Total Population: 15,342

Area: 72.17 km² (27.86 mi.²)

Raposos was founded in 1690 by Pedro de Morais Raposos who was a *bandeirante* (Portuguese Brazilian fortune hunters that enslaved the indigenous Indians for profit and later began to seek after gold, silver and diamond mines). Also, in 1690, the first Catholic church in the state of Minas Gerais, *Nossa Senhora da Conceição* (*Our Lady of Conception*), was constructed in Raposos.

Raposos is located in the Southeast of Brazil in the state of Minas Gerais. The city is 23 km from the capital of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 610 km from São Paulo, 455 km from Rio de Janeiro and, 758 km from the capital of Brazil, Brasília.

The following is a table shows the religious distribution in Raposos:

RELIGION	POPULATION	PERCENTAGE
Roman Catholicism	10,528	73.5%
Evangelical Christianity	3,752	26.2%
Spiritism	48	.3%

**The remaining population of 1,014 are either affiliated with other religions or have no religion.*

Raposos has 7,969 women as compared to 7,372 men. The average number of people living in a home is 3.5.

Raposos manufactures cassava flour and its staple crops include: rice, beans, corn and sugar cane.

******The above information was accessed on November 20, 2012 and can be found at the following websites: <http://www.raposos.mg.gov.br/>, [http://www.raposos.mg.gov.br /Materia_especifica/6486/Historia-da-cidade](http://www.raposos.mg.gov.br/Materia_especifica/6486/Historia-da-cidade) (updated on March 20, 2009), http://www.raposos.mg.gov.br/Materia_especifica/6484/Dados-do-municipio (updated on March 20, 2009), <http://www.brasilsabido.com.br/populacao/raposos-mg-2553.html>.

II. PRAYER POINTERS: RAPOSOS

**These prayer pointers were gathered from the first two prayerwalks, each lasting four to five hours, in Raposos with TFC leadership and volunteers. They focus on what was felt and gathered from the group discussions after the prayerwalks.*

- A. Outreach to focus on the southeastern part of Raposos in the bairro (neighborhood) of Varea dos Sítios and the southern part of the Centro bairro. Pray for favor with the residents and open hearts to the gospel.
- B. There is a strong Catholic territorial presence in Raposos. Pray for harmony and peace with committed Catholic leadership and members. Pray for sensitivity to the Catholic presence and their history in Raposos. Pray for favor with Catholic leadership and neighbors as the church is established.
- C. Pray for the healing of marriages, families and relationships. There are many dysfunctional families in Raposos.
- D. Pray for freedom from bondage to drugs and alcohol in Raposos. Many people were either drunk (in the middle of the day) or on drugs when conversing with them during the prayerwalks.
- E. Pray for physical healings. Quite a number of youth with mental disorientation and problems, many of them since birth, were visited and prayed for during the prayerwalks.
- F. Pray for deliverance from an oppressed spirit. Many residents made comments and references that they are looked down upon by people from Belo Horizonte, a much larger city and the capital of the state of Minas Gerais, even though the city of Raposos (founded in 1690) was founded more than 200 years before Belo Horizonte (founded in 1897). Many residents do business with Belo Horizonte since it is only a distance of 23 kilometers. Pray for TFC members to be sensitive to this feeling in Raposos so that the genuine love of Christ might be felt.

**This list of prayer pointers, gathered from the prayer walks, with the statistical information was presented to the church during a TFC prayer meeting on November 23, 2012.*

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